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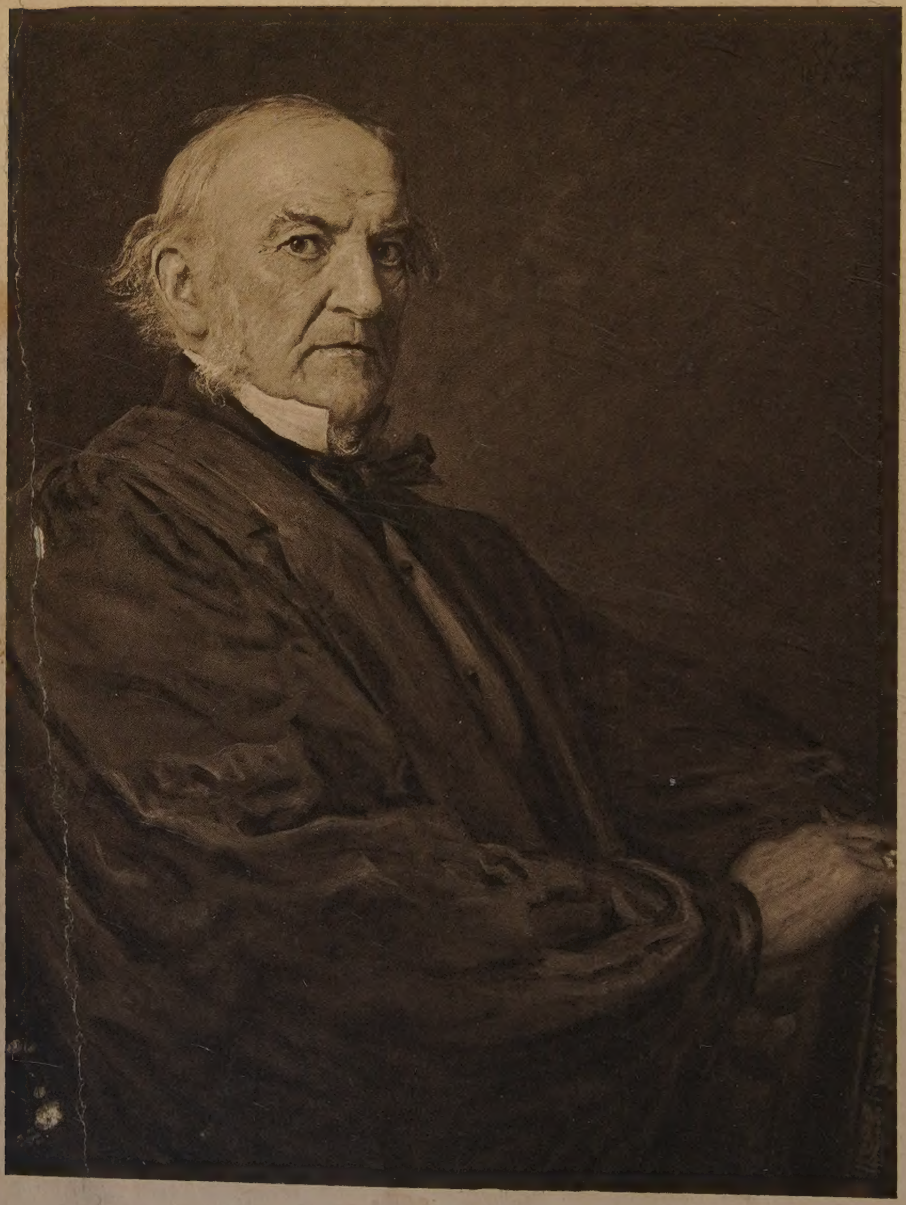

W. E. Gladstone

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# THE LIFE

OF

# WILLIAM EWART

# GLADSTONE

EDITED BY

SIR WEMYSS REID

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149H

THIS RECORD OF THE LIFE OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO MRS. GLADSTONE, BY WHOSE DEVOTED CARE AND AFFECTION HE WAS SUSTAINED THROUGHOUT HIS PROLONGED CAREER OF PATRIOTIC SERVICE, AND IN WHOM HE FOUND HIS TRUEST COMPANION, COUNSELLOR, AND FRIEND.

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# PREFATORY NOTE.

LITTLE need be said by way of preface to this Life of Mr. Gladstone. The editor may, however, call attention to the fact that the volume is the work of many different hands, and that writers have been selected who had special means of dealing authoritatively with particular aspects of Mr. Gladstone's many-sided life and character. One of the contributions—that which deals with Mr. Gladstone's Home Life—is anonymous. The reader may rest satisfied that it is from a thoroughly authoritative source.

Great care has been taken in preparing this Memoir to trace the beginnings of Mr. Gladstone's public career, both at the Oxford Union and in the House of Commons, and many facts of interest bearing upon the opening of his life as a public man are now for the first time made known to the world.

The main portion of the political narrative is from the pen of Mr. F. W. Hirst. That gentleman has devoted special study to the history of the Gladstonian era, and to him belongs the chief credit for the fulness of this attempt to tell the story of Mr. Gladstone's life as a political leader and statesman.

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# THE LIFE OF
# WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

## INTRODUCTION.

### MR. GLADSTONE'S CHARACTER AND CAREER: A GENERAL APPRECIATION.

Four Times Prime Minister—Length of Service—Not a Prime Minister by Accident—Early Recognition of his Greatness—First Meeting with Miss Catherine Glynne—A Tribute from Bishop Wilberforce—A Great Churchman—Changes of Opinion Due to Mental Growth—The Versatility of his Genius—His Social Charm—Out-of-the-Way Knowledge—Absorbing Literary Interests—Friendship with Tennyson—Talk on Public Affairs—Diary of an Evening's Conversation—Promptitude in Literary Matters—The Ship-owner and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—Courtesy and Humility—Inflexibility and Sternness—An Imperious Leader—Testimony of Mr. Childers and Mr. Forster—Enthusiasm and Impetuosity—The Devotion of Immediate Adherents—His Ascendency over the Masses—His Knowledge of Mankind—His Love for and Faith in Humanity—A Member of Grillion's: Lord Houghton's Poetical Celebration of a Dinner in Solitude—Artistic Tastes—Forming a Library—Love of Walking: Evading the Detectives—Compassion for Outcasts: Dealing with a Blackmailer—Knowledge of Bygone London—Piety the Key of his Character—A Pathetic Incident of his Last Days—A Casuist—His Essential Consistency and Nice Sense of Honour—Hatred of Oppression—Rebuking Lord Palmerston—His Eloquence: The Speech on the Bradlaugh Relief Bill; Expository Power—His Splendid Intrepidity.

LORD BEACONSFIELD'S STATUE IN THE ABBEY.

THE statue which commemorates the career and the fame of Lord Beaconsfield in Westminster Abbey states, in addition to his name, only the fact that he was twice Prime Minister of England. None can doubt that in this fact lies an irresistible claim to a place in the great central shrine of the British race. But the man whose life we are about to record possessed a still higher claim than that of his old rival to the reverence and admiration of his fellow-countrymen. Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister of the Queen and ruler of the British Empire not twice, but four times. It is a unique distinction, and it is probable that centuries will elapse before anyone

**Four Times Prime Minister.**

can divide it with him. To have been the head of four different Administrations, and thus to have been the ruler of the Empire for no inconsiderable number of years, is to have attained a distinction such as not even the greatest of his predecessors enjoyed, and to have secured a place in English history which not even the most envious of his detractors could pretend to belittle.

**Length of Service.**

But, unique as is the fact that Mr. Gladstone was four times Prime Minister, it is scarcely so remarkable as the length of time during which he served his country in places of high authority. For more than sixty years he sat in the House of Commons, and it is no exaggeration to say that for at least half that term he was the leading figure in that assemblage, the man of greatest influence and authority among the Commoners of England. For more than half a century he was a member of the Privy Council; that is to say, he was one of the select few from whom the rulers of the British Empire are chosen; and throughout his public life, from the days of his youth onwards to his venerable age, he was at all times a man of mark. Men might agree with him or differ from him; they might admire his brilliant talents or quarrel with some of his special idiosyncrasies; but no one ever ventured to dispute the fact that from the moment of his entrance upon public life he was one of the most conspicuous figures upon the stage, always an interesting figure and at times the cynosure of every eye.

**Not a Prime Minister by Accident.**

It was not, however, merely in respect of official experience and length of service that Mr. Gladstone's career was unique. He did not, it is true, rival Mr. Disraeli in what may be described as the picturesqueness of his personal struggle. Disraeli rose from the desk in a lawyer's office to the highest place of honour in the land. Mr. Gladstone had to pass through no such personal struggle in his earliest days as that which distinguished the career of his great rival; but, on the other hand, he was not born among the governing classes, nor did he rise to eminence by virtue of private influence and patronage. Many men have become Prime Ministers by something like accident. Most men have risen to that great post as the direct result of the circumstances in which they were placed, rather than through any special individual merit of their own. But Mr. Gladstone, when he began public life, was merely the son of a successful middle-class man, and the splendid position which he secured was won purely by his own personal merit and force of character.

**Early Recognition of his Greatness.**

As we look back upon that brilliant career, the most remarkable fact that strikes us is the way in which Mr. Gladstone was marked out by his contemporaries, almost from his boyhood, for the position which he eventually obtained, the Premiership of an English Government and of the English

race. When men become great there are always to be found those who lay claim to having predicted their greatness before it was seen by the outer world, and the world knows how much value, as a rule, to attach to these post-dated prophecies. But there is no room for doubt as to the predictions which accompanied Mr. Gladstone from his earliest years onwards to the moment when the hopes he had excited were realised. At Eton his schoolfellows, with juvenile enthusiasm, hailed him as the

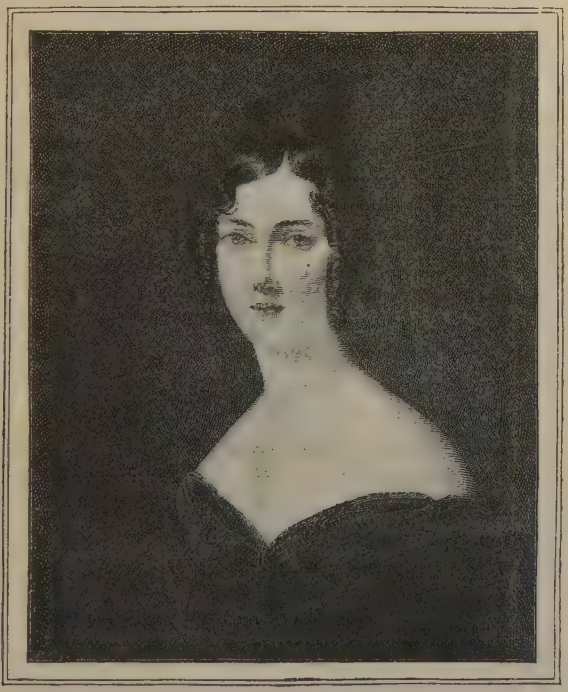


*Photo: G. Watmough Webster, Chester.*

MRS. GLADSTONE AT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE.

*(From a Miniature by Sir W. C. Ross.)*

future light of the senate, while at Oxford he made one memorable speech in the Union—curiously enough a speech in opposition to the Reform Bill—which drew from his contemporary, Bishop Wordsworth, the declaration that he felt "no less sure than of my own existence that Gladstone, our then Christchurch undergraduate, would one day rise to be Prime Minister of England."

It would be easy to cite a score of similar predictions which were made at a time when he was standing upon the bare threshold of public life; but there is only one other illustration of the extraordinary confidence in his future with which he inspired those who were brought in

contact with him that need be mentioned here. A good many years ago the present writer had the privilege of hearing from Mrs. Gladstone an account of her first meeting with her illustrious husband. Mrs. Gladstone, then Miss Catherine Glynne, was travelling in Italy with her brother, Stephen Glynne. It happened that at the same time Mr. Gladstone was in the same country in attendance upon a sister who was in very delicate health. One day at Florence Miss Glynne and her brother passed a young man who was sitting on a low wall by the side of the road. He bowed to Mr. Stephen Glynne, who returned the salutation. Miss Glynne immediately asked her brother who "the very handsome young man" was whom he had recognised. "Don't you know him?" was the reply. "That is young Gladstone, the member for Newark, and the man who, everybody says, will one day be Prime Minister of England." This story, which I heard from the lips of the distinguished lady herself, is proof as strong as could be desired of the fact that Mr. Gladstone was thus marked out from his youth to fill a conspicuous and lofty position in the life of his country.

It is noticeable that from his very earliest years he was surrounded by a band of admirers not less ardent, though less numerous, than that which followed him when he became the leader of a party. He always had around him a number of friends who believed in him, admired him, trusted him, with a confidence and an enthusiasm which were apparently boundless. He was always regarded by these friends not so much as a man who was certain to get on in life and to achieve fame for himself, but as a man who would do great things for his country, and for the special causes in which he was interested.

Nor were they obscure or foolish people who had this feeling with regard to Mr. Gladstone. Arthur Hallam, Bishop Wilberforce, Bishop Wordsworth, Lord Aberdeen were amongst them. They were, in short, men who knew much of the world, and were well able to judge individual character. That such men should have united in their esteem of the overmastering qualities of their friend is a remarkable fact. It helps to explain the hold which Mr. Gladstone secured in the House of Commons directly he entered it, and in society as soon as his work in Parliament began to be talked of out of doors. It must not be supposed that this fervent admiration of his early friends had reference exclusively or even chiefly to his intellectual endowments. On the contrary, it is noticeable that in some of the earliest tributes paid to him by his contemporaries it was his character rather than his abilities which seemed to command the highest admiration. "Noble as ever," says Bishop Wilberforce, recording in his diary a talk with Mr. Gladstone; and again he writes, though at a later period, "You have in Mr. Gladstone a man of the highest and noblest principle, who has shown unmistakably that he is

**Genius and Character.**

POPLAR



ready to sacrifice every personal aim for what he has set before himself as a high object." From a hundred other quarters the same testimony may be secured. Mr. Gladstone dazzled his schoolfellows and his comrades at college by his genius, but he attracted them still more by the merits of his character. One of them notes that he was, when at Oxford, a

BUST OF ARTHUR HALLAM.
*(By Sir F. Chantrey.)*

habitual reader of the Bible; another testifies to the fact that, even as a boy at Eton, he was noted for the purity of his thoughts and his life.

It is perhaps not surprising in these circumstances that his friends in his earliest days looked upon him as the man who was likely to be the great champion, not of a political party, but of the cause of religion in this country. His devotion to the Church, though his theological opinions passed through many phases before they became settled in the form which

they took in the prime of his career, was always intense. Whether as an Evangelical during his days at home and at the University, or as a High Churchman in later years, his attachment to the Church of England was that of a son ready to offer up everything of his own on her behalf. Indeed, no one can understand the character of Mr. Gladstone who does not realise the fact of this intense and almost passionate devotion to the Church of England which lay at the very root of his character, and which, down to his very latest hour, coloured all the acts of his public life. We are going to tell the story of the life of a great statesman, but the reader must never forget that it is also the life of a great Churchman.

A Great Churchman.

Looking back upon Mr. Gladstone's career, no one can fail to be struck by the fact that in his early days he figured as the opponent of almost all the causes of which in later life he was the ardent champion. Mention has been made of that speech against the Whig Reform Bill in the Oxford Union that led Bishop Wordsworth to predict that he would become Prime Minister. He was opposed to the opening of Universities to Dissenters, seeing innumerable evils in the abolition of tests; he was the ardent defender of the Church in Ireland until he saw with grief that, although it was a church in name, its spirit had waxed faint and its efforts had become feeble. Macaulay had described him very early in life as the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories of his time, and this was long the popular conception of his character. It follows that, to the superficial observer, it would seem that no man has ever been more inconsistent than Mr. Gladstone, and that his later career was a direct and flagrant contradiction of the principles which he professed at the outset of his public life. Yet the reader of these pages will find that this is not, after all, the truth about Mr. Gladstone. He will find for one thing that in all the mental changes which he underwent there was none that was dictated to him by any sense of his own self-interest. He will find, on the contrary, that not a few of those changes were forced upon him by the stern processes of intellectual conviction; that he was pained to the heart at having to part with old convictions, and to substitute new ones for them, and that more than once he had to pay a very heavy price, not merely in popularity, but in actual position, for the change of opinion which he was too honest to conceal from the world.

Changes of Opinion due to Mental Growth.

Talking one day with Bishop Wilberforce, he told that distinguished prelate that his sympathies were with the Conservatives, though his opinions were with the Liberals. This remark, made nearly fifty years ago, remained true to the very end of his days. At the time of his death, it was said that in him the last real Conservative had passed away. Intense devotion to old causes, old traditions, and old institutions was

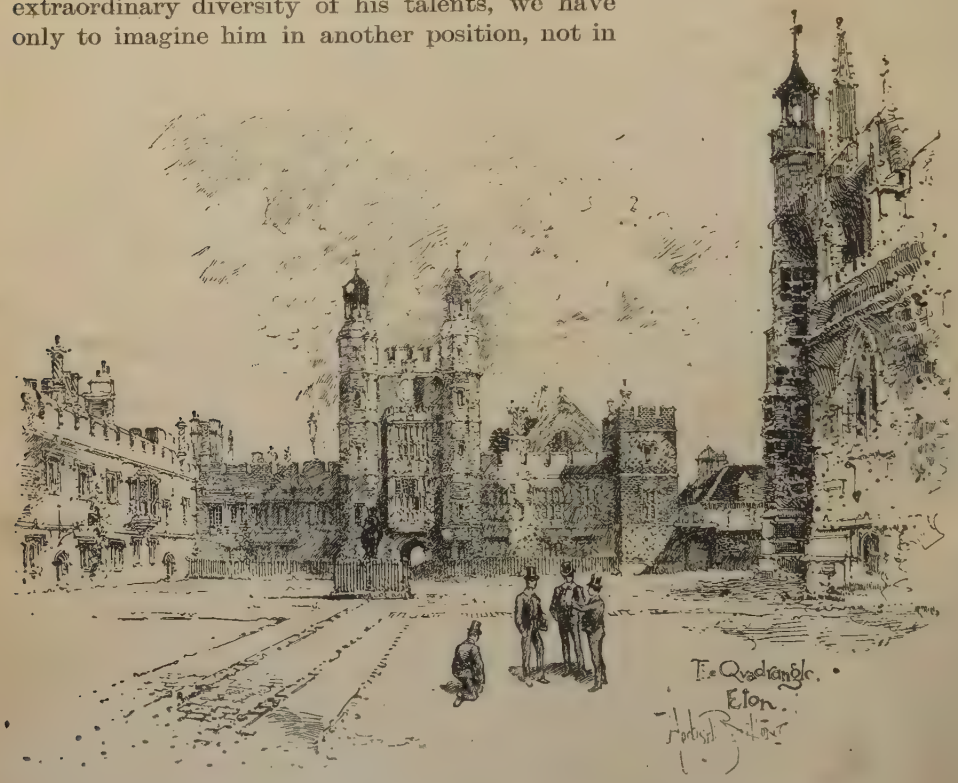
always one of the salient features of his character. But along with this sympathy with and love for the past, and the things that belonged to the past, there was that overmastering sense of truth which led him to submit himself to the irresistible processes of logic when once he had become convinced that the day of the old things had passed by, and that the welfare of his country demanded that he should turn to the things which were new. His changes, his inconsistencies, as men call them, were, in fact, no more than the evidences of his growth, of the development of his mind, and of its power of absorbing new ideas. None the less, it must be confessed that among the many remarkable features of this remarkable man, the vicissitudes which he underwent in the opinions he professed are not the least noticeable. They must always make his career one of special interest to the student of human nature, and to those who desire to acquaint themselves with the hidden processes of a great mind.

If his official career was unique, and if the general consensus of opinion as to his future at the time when he stood upon the threshold of life was almost unprecedented, there was another feature of his life which was not less noteworthy. This may be described as the versatility of his genius. The world knows Mr. Gladstone as a great political leader whose eloquence for half a century swayed the House of Commons and inspired the mass of his fellow countrymen with enthusiasm on behalf of his political purposes. It knows him as a great administrator, under whose control some of the most sweeping and some of the most useful changes in our institutions have been carried out. It knows him as a statesman, who, viewing from a loftier standpoint than that of many of his contemporaries the affairs with which he had to deal, could see further afield, who was quick to sympathise with the victims of oppression in all quarters of the globe, and whose voice and hand brought freedom or the hope of justice to more than one oppressed nationality. But those who knew him best are unanimous in declaring that, great as he was in the special work to which he devoted his life, he would have been no less great if Destiny had called him into another path. When he was at Oxford, it was his desire to take orders and to go into the Church. His father's refusal to allow him to do so gave the world a great statesman, but deprived it of a great ecclesiast and theologian. That he would have risen to the highest place in the Church of England if he had entered its service no one can doubt; and many men have speculated upon what might have happened within that church if, during the past sixty years, it had enjoyed not merely the undying affection, but the whole of the time, the intellectual resources, and the extraordinary physical and moral energies of such a man as Mr. Gladstone. Again, if he had gone to the Bar, he would have become probably

**A Versatile Genius.**

the greatest of all Lord Chancellors; for, with his strong leaning towards casuistry, his delight in following subtle logical inquiries and deductions, he would unquestionably have secured for himself a prominent place in the ranks of the greatest lawyers our country has produced.

If, however, we wish to get some idea of the extraordinary diversity of his talents, we have only to imagine him in another position, not in




THE QUADRANGLE, ETON COLLEGE.

one of the learned professions, but following in his father's footsteps as a great Liverpool merchant. If this had been the lot for which he was destined by Providence, there are many who believe that he would have made the name of Gladstone as renowned in the world of commerce as the name of Rothschild is in the world of finance. Not long ago one who was intimately associated with him in his private and personal affairs declared emphatically that nothing he had ever seen of Mr. Gladstone had inspired him with so great an admiration for his astounding abilities as the way in which he had managed his own financial concerns, and at a time when they had fallen into some

confusion owing to his absorption in public duties, had succeeded in setting them once more on a secure and prosperous basis. As statesman, theologian, lawyer, merchant, to whatever life he might have been called, it is abundantly evident that he would have attained no secondary place in it. Even as it is, though his great work was done in the political arena, he has left behind him memorials of his knowledge and his capacity in almost all these fields. He seems to be the Admirable Crichton of the nineteenth century, and, as such, the story of his life is one that men of all parties and all classes may study with interest and profit.

*Photo: Gillman and Co., Oxford.*

THE TOM QUADRANGLE OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

**Social Charm.**

I have said nothing, so far, of another sphere in which Mr. Gladstone held a unique position. I refer to the social life of our times, and to the personal fascination which he was able to exercise over a vast number of men and women who, during his prolonged life, were brought into contact with him in the social circle. Only those who had the privilege of knowing Mr. Gladstone in private life, and who have been under the wand of the magician, can really understand the extent of his personal supremacy, of his extraordinary power of attracting and fascinating all who came within the sound of his voice. Every book of memoirs that

has been published during the last thirty years in which his name occurs bears testimony to this side of his character. In whatever company he happened to be he became at once and without effort its central figure. Even before he was famous, men listened eagerly for the sound of his voice, and delighted in his conversation. At Eton and at Oxford the young men who were his fellow students made him the centre of their intellectual and social life. At Oxford a debating society which he had founded came to be called the "Weg.," not so much in his honour, though it was, of course, designed as an honour, as because it enabled its members to see a great deal of him and enjoy his conversation freely. In London, from 1832 to 1894, his was a name to conjure with by the host who was so fortunate as to secure him as a guest. Even during that period of eclipse, immediately after the defeat of the Home Rule Bill and his Government in 1886, when Society had resolved to punish those whom it regarded as traitors by exclusion from its dining-rooms and from social intercourse, Mr. Gladstone, though he might well have been regarded as the chief offender, was excepted from the general condemnation. There were, it is true, some narrow-minded people who refused to make this exception, greatly to their own loss. A certain peeress, the mother of a very pronounced political opponent of Mr. Gladstone during those years, told the present writer one day that she had been invited to meet the Liberal leader, but had declined to do so because she feared that it would compromise her son. Her hostess would not, however, take the refusal, and finally succeeded in inducing her to agree to dine at the same table as Mr. Gladstone. She only consented to do so on condition that steps were taken to prevent her son from hearing of her terrible falling away from the true faith of Unionism. The lady had told me, with some perturbation of spirit, of the incident before the dinner took place. Meeting her afterwards, I asked her how she had enjoyed herself. "Oh," she said, "I never enjoyed myself so much in my life. Mr. Gladstone talked to me nearly the whole time, and though I still think him a wretch, he is certainly the most delightful wretch that ever lived."

In his actual company men forgot what they regarded as his sins against the classes to which they themselves belonged. Fascinated by his brilliant talk, his overpowering earnestness, the extraordinary variety and fulness of his information, they gave themselves up to the enjoyment of that which was generally recognised as being one of the great intellectual treats of social life during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Nothing was more remarkable in his conversation than the minute character of his knowledge of subjects of which it might be supposed that a busy man could know nothing. There was no fact which seemed to be too small to deserve his notice, none which, having once acquired, he did not

Out-of-the-way Knowledge.

forthwith docket and put away in some recess of his memory in order that he might use it when it was needed. I remember a dinner party at which he was seated beside a member of the Vanderbilt family. The conversation had turned upon the price of real estate in the City of London, and the enormous value of land in the neighbourhood of the Bank of England. "You have nothing like that in New York, Mr. Vanderbilt," said Mr. Gladstone turning to the distinguished American; "great as New York is, the value of its land is a trifle compared to the value of land in the City of London." Mr. Vanderbilt acquiesced, and modestly named the highest figure at which he knew land to have been sold in his native city. "I beg your pardon," said Mr. Gladstone instantly, "you are mistaken, that is not the highest price." And forthwith he gave the astonished millionaire more than one case in which sites in New York had been sold for still larger sums than those that he, who might be presumed to have more than a passing acquaintance with the subject, had named.

On another occasion at a dinner party someone made reference to the fact that the asparagus season would soon begin. "It has begun already," said Mr. Gladstone; "but only the very rich or the very foolish can enjoy it at present. The best asparagus is sold to-day at £2 a bundle." Mrs. Gladstone, who was present, was moved to say, "How can you possibly know that? I am sure we have bought none." "No, my dear," was his instant reply; "but when I see a new thing in the shops I always like to inquire the price, and I went into a shop in Piccadilly this morning and asked what the remarkably fine

"WHEN I SEE A NEW THING IN THE SHOPS," ETC.

asparagus they had in the window was selling at." Truly the old simile of the elephant's trunk was not inapplicable to the intellect of Mr. Gladstone.

It was, however, in serious conversation that Mr. Gladstone charmed his hearers most. No one who has had the pleasure of listening to him as he discoursed of books, of preachers, of historical incidents within his own recollection, and of those wider problems of ethics and philosophy which he loved to discuss, can ever forget the impression made upon them by the outpourings of such a mind. So far as books were concerned, he had loved them from his youth. Quite early in his life he had begun to write for the *Quarterly Review* and for other periodicals, and his mind was ever on the alert for the appearance of new stars in the literary firmament. In his later days, when he had definitely retired from the cares of office, he devoted himself to study and to literature with the ardour of a youth in his teens. But all through his life, even in his busiest moments, he had found leisure to keep himself well abreast of the literature of the day, and of the thought not merely of England but of Europe. His friends declared that he devoured books rather than read them, so rapid was the process of perusal. But no one who has had occasion to discuss with him any particular volume could find reason to doubt that he had made himself thoroughly master of its contents.

**Literary Interests.**

A characteristic of his was that he was deeply interested in one thing at a particular moment. Far-spreading as were his interests, he always had one special object upon which at the moment he concentrated the greater part of his attention. Sometimes it was a book; naturally enough it was more frequently a political measure or movement. But, whatever it may have been, no one who enjoyed the honour of Mr. Gladstone's friendship was ever left in doubt as to this favourite topic of the hour. Many can doubtless remember how, on the appearance a few years ago of the "Life of Cardinal Manning," Mr. Gladstone, having read it with his usual avidity, made it for several weeks the chief topic of his conversation. No public events sufficed to drive it from his mind. It might almost have seemed that this biography, with its interesting and remarkable revelations of character and history, was the most important event of the day. I remember that chancing at that time to meet Mr. Gladstone at a London railway station, as he was on the point of leaving town for Hawarden, I found myself instantly involved amid the noise and bustle of the place in a discussion upon the book and its merits.

There was characteristic impetuosity in this fashion of his with regard to particular books and topics. It was a fashion which has been shared by very few men of any position at all, and by none who have been called upon to take so great a part in public affairs and in the business

*Photo: Cassell and Company, Limited.*

MR. GLADSTONE'S STUDY AT HAWARDEN.

of life as that which fell to the lot of Mr. Gladstone. In this respect also, therefore, it may be said that his personality was unique. Someone, it is to be hoped, will in due time record for us those conversations the far-off memories of which still linger in so many breasts. If that task should ever be performed, and Mr. Gladstone should find a satisfactory Boswell, the world will begin to understand not so much his greatness in the senate as his ascendency in social and public life. His reading was omnivorous, and he seemed to assimilate everything that he read, transmuting it in the laboratory of his mind and pouring it forth in a stream, at once copious and lucid, of narrative, opinion, and comment. Thus it was that to know him and to be much in his society was to enjoy very literally a liberal education. He delighted to talk of his contemporaries of old days, the great men whom he had known in his youth, or whom he had encountered in many different fields of labour. Nor was there ever anything more frank and spontaneous than his discussion of these old friends and acquaintances. The note of unmistakable sincerity rang through all that he had to say of them. No praise, however great, rang falsely when it fell from his lips, and where he censured, his hearer felt convinced that he was speaking that which he believed in his inmost heart, and that the severity of his judgments was only tempered by the characteristic charity and sympathy with which he regarded all human imperfections.

**Friendship with Tennyson.**

His friendship with Tennyson was one of the features of his life which must seem most striking to his friends on looking back. After all, a friendship between a Prime Minister and a poet must in itself be remarkable, even when both are men of such peculiar eminence and distinction. But the friendship between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Tennyson was not an ordinary one. It certainly had nothing in it of the patronage which would have characterised their relationship a century earlier. Mr. Gladstone never spoke of Tennyson except in a tone of profound personal humility and deep admiration. With all the ardour of his devotion to his own work, he never allowed it to be supposed that he did not perceive the superiority of the work in which his old friend was engaged. At first sight it might seem that no men could have been more different in mental constitution, in ideas, and in sympathies than the Liberal statesman and the author of "The Idylls of the King." Yet the correspondence of both testifies that this was not the case. From first to last they were united by a bond which was that not merely of a common admiration but a common affection. Asked one day if Tennyson had formed one of the famous deputation which proceeded from the Cambridge Union to Oxford in 1829 to maintain the superiority of Shelley's poetry to that of Byron, Mr. Gladstone, who had been one of the Oxonians who received the visitors from their fellow University, replied at once, "Oh dear no!

Tennyson was far too much engrossed in his own affairs to trouble himself with questions of that kind. All through his life he has made it his business to follow his own vocation and to allow nothing to divert him from it, *and a good thing for us and for the world it is that he has done so!*"

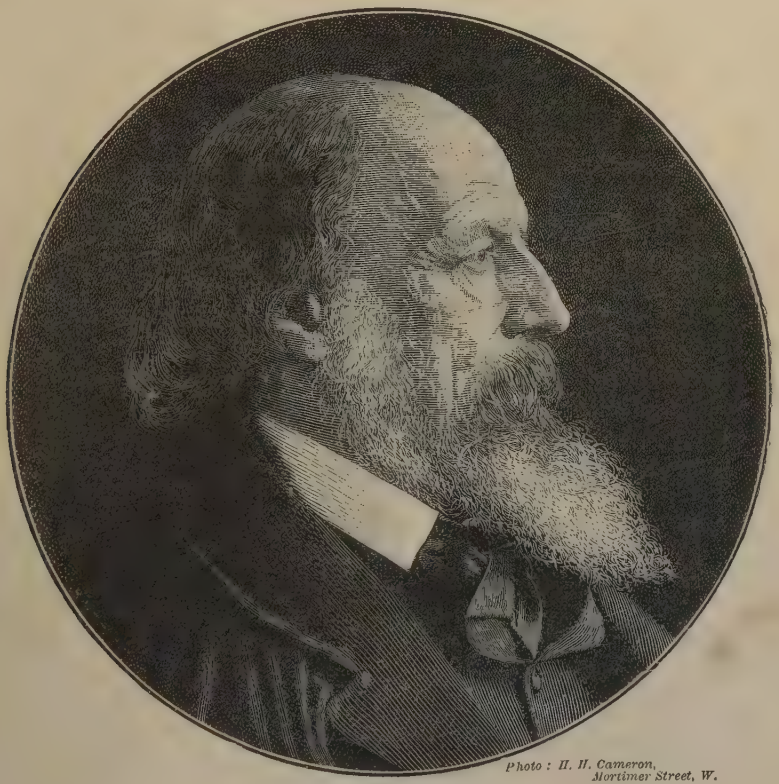


*Photo: H. H. Cameron, Mortimer Street, W.*

LORD TENNYSON.

When he was not talking of books and of old literary friendships, nothing pleased Mr. Gladstone more than to discuss some historical point lying just beyond the bounds of his own personal knowledge. Canning was one of his favourite topics; Fox and the Pitts formed another, and it was delightful to hear one who had himself passed through the great school of practical politics, casting the bright ray of his intellect upon careers that to most of us had become merged in the dry pages of history. Yet it was still more delightful when, coming to later days, he talked of public affairs in which he had himself played a part, and described with that

**Talk on Public Affairs.**

wonderful frankness and thoroughness which were characteristics of his conversation, many an incident regarding which the public had formed an opinion entirely misleading. At such times it seemed as though Mr. Gladstone knew nothing of party politics and party distinctions, and he would praise and blame his friends and his opponents with an impartiality that was almost startling. Through it all it was easy to perceive that there ran the thread of distinct personal principles, founded upon the convictions of a serious and conscientious mind. At this point it may not be amiss to transcribe a few notes of an evening's conversation, as they were set down at the moment by the privileged auditor. They will serve to illustrate what has been said as to the astonishing frankness with which Mr. Gladstone was in the habit of expressing himself in the social circle.

**Frankness in the Social Circle.**

"Victoria Hotel, St. Leonards, March 26, 1891.

"I came down from town at 3.40 yesterday. At Charing Cross Mr. Gladstone and his daughter, Miss Gladstone, also joined the train. Mr. Gladstone had one of his eyes slightly blackened, the result of a fall a few days ago. He had been calling to inquire after Lord Granville late at night, and was returning home alone when, in a lonely back street in Mayfair, he stumbled and fell. He lay, he says, for fully a minute stunned in the road. No one came to his assistance ('they may have thought I was drunk'), and when he rose he found himself much bruised. Mrs. Gladstone, who gave me this account of the accident, expressed her delight that nothing about it had got into the newspapers. At St. Leonards we went to the Royal Victoria Hotel, where we were to be the guests of Mr. A——, with whom Mr. Gladstone was already staying. At dinner the party consisted simply of Mr. and Mrs. G., Miss G., Mr. A——, and myself. The following are notes of Mr. G.'s talk:—

"He began by talking of the South Eastern Railway, and the lateness of the train that afternoon. Could I tell him why we travelled so slowly during the first part of the journey, what were the causes of the delay, etc? I suggested the holidays. 'But the holiday traffic,' said he, 'the cheap tickets, do not begin until to-morrow.' He spoke of Mr. Parnell, and expressed much satisfaction when I reported to him that a Liberal Unionist member who had just returned from Dublin had told me that Parnell was unmistakably beaten in Ireland. After expressing his regret at the injuries to Healy, he went on to say, 'But nothing that has happened since, nothing that has been done by Mr. Parnell, has made me change my opinion as to the baseness and meanness of the conduct of the two Houses in their vote on the report of the Parnell Commission last year. And to think of the House of Lords passing such a vote!' he exclaimed, throwing up his hands: 'Good Heavens, the House of Lords, of all bodies in the world! There has been no act so wicked on the part of Parliament since the time of the Stuarts. When the vote was first proposed I went to the Speaker, and said to him, "Mr. Speaker, I do not think I shall be able to say anything about this resolution, for if I do I shall be bound to use language for which you will be bound to commit me to the Clock Tower." The consequence is that I have laid myself open to the charge of saying things outside the House about the dignity of Parliament which I dared not say within the House. It is perfectly true. I *dared* not say these things in the House, for if I did say them, it would be the duty of the Speaker to commit me, and that would be too ridiculous (bursting into laughter). Besides, no man has a right to do anything which would tend to add to the difficulties or lower the reputation of Parliament.'

**An Evening's Conversation.**

**The Parnell Commission.**

"He discussed Murray's 'Life,' an early copy of which he had received that day. 'Mr. Murray has asked me to write about it, and I suppose I must, for I believe I am the

only man left who had literary dealings with old Mr. Murray. Have you read the book yet? No. Then read first Chapter III. of the second volume—an account of the *Representative*—the most extraordinary story I ever read in my life. Benjamin Disraeli goes to Murray and proposes to him to start a daily paper which is to "focus the intelligence of the world." That is his phrase, and Murray adopts it. Murray agrees to find half the capital, Disraeli finding a quarter, and a man called Powles the other quarter. Powles was a man of straw; Disraeli knew he had not a penny in the world. And yet, on the strength of this proposal, poor Murray puts down and loses £26,000! It was a downright swindle. Disraeli showed himself then—he was not one-and-twenty—to be a mixture of an enthusiast and a swindler. But what a wonderful fellow he was! He went to Scotland, saw Lockhart and Scott, and won them over to the scheme. Scott was a hard-headed fellow; Lockhart was one of the ablest men I ever knew. Yet both these men were won over by this young fellow of twenty-one! Murray ought to have prosecuted him for the swindle; but instead of that, old Disraeli had the effrontery to complain of the way in which he had treated his son. Never was there such a story!'

**Disraeli and Mr. Murray.**

"Mr. G. went on to say that he had never written anything about Disraeli himself, though often asked to do so, and that he never would. 'Whoever else may write about him, I am the last man in the world who can do so.' A little later. 'This is the Conservative hero, this adventurer! The Tory conscience has assimilated him in spite of his character. Derby is forgotten; Wellington is forgotten; this is the man they worship!' He spoke of Lord Salisbury in terms of warm praise, of his ability, his devotion to duty, and his high character, but expressed his regret that when speaking in public he should so frequently allow himself to be betrayed into the use of language of unjustifiable strength. 'He makes rash speeches and vulgar speeches; but he cannot help it. In 1867 and 1868, when he was out with Dizzy, he was on very friendly terms with me—was cultivating my friendship, in fact; and yet at that very time he was constantly attacking me in public.' He talked about his recent apology to Huxley. 'Whenever you have to apologise, do it thoroughly, do it handsomely.'"

I have quoted these notes of an old conversation at length, not so much because of the interesting nature of the topics which Mr. Gladstone discussed, but because of the illustration they afford of the frankness with which he expressed himself in private conversation. Desiring to show in how many different respects his character and career were unique, I have dwelt at some length upon this matter of his conversation, though it is impossible to hope to convey to the reader any true idea of its variety, its freshness, its fascination, unless it could be reproduced in the manner in which Boswell reproduced the pregnant talk of Samuel Johnson.

Still dwelling upon what may be described as the literary side of his character, it may be noted that in all his literary engagements he had a business-like promptitude and despatch in his methods not too commonly to be found among professional men of letters. One of the most striking instances of this feature of his character was furnished to me shortly before the publication of my Life of the late Mr. Forster. Mr. Gladstone, though with some reluctance, owing to the pressure of his work, had agreed to read the proofs of the second volume, in which the important political events connected with Mr. Forster's tenure of the Irish Secretaryship were dealt with. Only those who are acquainted with proof-reading know

**Promptitude in Literary Matters.**

Mem. on Letters of W. E. G.

Houghton.

Vol I - pp 247. No objection.

257. Plum to describe. Mrs Lister instead of inserting it: citing if you think fit the three special points of praise.

272. No objection.

308. Do: as to merely common Rhine.

332. Plum describe.. (The quotations from Rhine are without unobjectionable enough admirable & my letter unintelligible without much more.)

495. Every word of my letter is true. But it is a partial description of a complex case. Plum must proceed to describe.

(Two fine Pictures mislaid. But six or eight remained. And Ld Aberdeen with the Duke of Newcastle (I think) wished us to remain.)

513. By all means retain: if only for Heidelberg sake.

Vol II. p. 107. Retain.

151. Retain - as his account.

236. Plum describe.

237. Retain

252. Plum describe.

Letters in the ships. No objection except as to the passages on Sanitary Measures which please to Gladstone.

Ely. Nov. 80.

FAC-SIMILE OF MEMORANDUM RELATING TO THE PROOFS OF LORD HOUGHTON'S "LIFE."

its irksomeness, and the fatigue which it causes to anyone engaged in it. It was with not a few misgivings that I forwarded to Mr. Gladstone one morning in June, 1888, the large bundle of more than one hundred slips of proof which I wished him to peruse. It was delivered at the house where he was then staying in town between nine and ten o'clock on the morning of the 11th of June. Entering the Reform Club at one o'clock on the same day, I was dismayed when the hall porter returned the bundle to me apparently intact. I was at once convinced that Mr. Gladstone, having found himself unable to give the time necessary to the reading of the proofs, had courteously returned them to me without loss of time. Nothing could exceed my surprise when, on opening the parcel, I found that the proofs had been fully read and marked, and that they were accompanied by a full memorandum in Mr. Gladstone's familiar handwriting dealing with the various points on which he thought that the statements made in the biography were not accurate, or required some explanation or modification. It was manifest that, having undertaken, however reluctantly, this task of revision, when the work was brought to his hands he had done it at once, and done it with a thoroughness which could not have been surpassed. This incident may appear a small one, yet it is so characteristic of the man and of the earnestness with which he carried out every task he undertook, that I venture to relate it at this length here. Many another instance of the same kind could be told from my own personal experience. In submitting the proofs of Lord Houghton's Life to him, I had, for example, still stronger evidence of the thoroughness with which he fulfilled any promise he had made; but it must suffice to say that all those who have had business dealings with Mr. Gladstone in relation to literary affairs have found that he was the most accurate and punctilious of all their contributors, the man who could be most thoroughly trusted to keep his word, and who, having once agreed to perform a certain task, might be confidently counted upon to accomplish it within the day or the hour he had named for the performance. No editor of late years has had so large an experience of Mr. Gladstone in these matters as Mr. Knowles, and I know that the editor of the *Nineteenth Century* will bear emphatic testimony in support of what I have just stated. Great therefore as statesman, great as orator, great as a social figure, as a scholar, as a theologian, and as a writer, Mr. Gladstone was no less fortunate in impressing those who were brought in close contact with him with his wonderful excellence as a man of business.

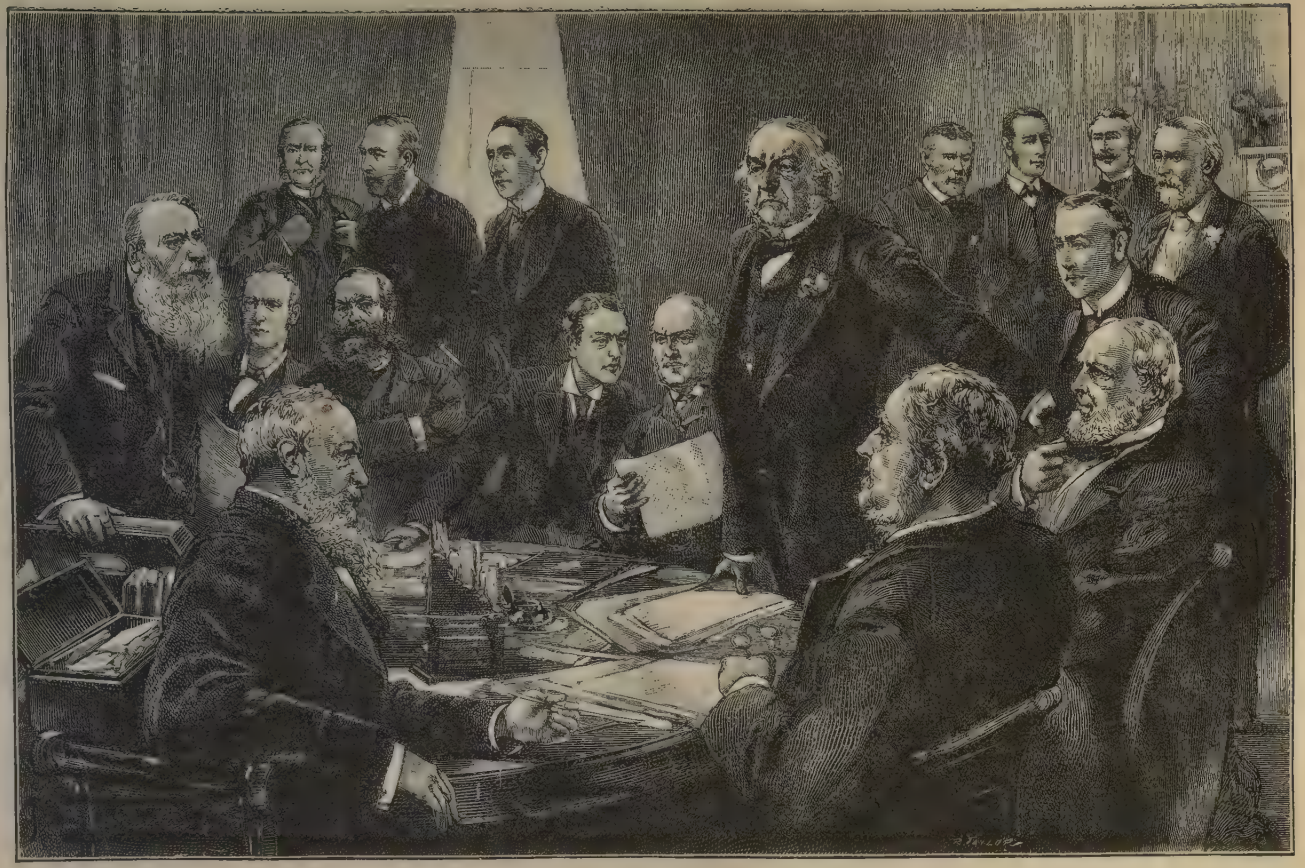
It is an easy matter, indeed, for any of his old editors to realise the truth of a story that was told by him more than forty years ago, at a time when he was just beginning his wonderful career as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The story was to the effect that, having some inquiries to make in the City in connection with the coming Budget, he

had gone to the office of Mr. Schaw Lindsay, a well-known shipowner and member of Parliament in those days, whom he wished to interrogate. Mr. Lindsay happened to be engaged, and Mr. Gladstone, not caring to disturb him, refrained from sending in his name, and waited patiently in an ante-room until the shipowner was at liberty. But he did not waste his time. Seizing some writing paper, he devoted himself to the preparation of a public document, and with his usual self-absorption continued his task, unconscious of the fact that he was being closely observed by another person who had been shown into the room to wait, like himself, until Mr. Lindsay was disengaged. This other person was a rough Northumbrian shipowner. Suddenly he addressed Mr. Gladstone in the rude Doric of the north: "Young man, are you in want of employment? If you are, I could just do with the likes of you in my office at North Shields. I have been watching you this half-hour, and never saw a man get through so much work in the same time before. Come to me, and you shall have a place in my office." Mr. Gladstone was sincerely pleased by this tribute to a side of his character with which the public who admired him for so many other things had no acquaintance.

The Shipowner and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

There was one feature of Mr. Gladstone's intercourse with the outside world so marked that it cannot be omitted even in this prefatory appreciation. This was his courtesy to all who came in contact with him. There were times, of course, when in his absorption in important public business he was compelled to turn abruptly from those who sought to address him. No man could more easily break away from the mere button-holing bore when he was engaged on his public tasks. But on the other hand, no one was ever more long-suffering than he when he encountered the bore in private life, and had to deal with him at a friend's dinner-table. It was on such occasions that the charming old-world courtesy of his manner became most apparent. Not the slightest evidence of his superiority in position to the humblest of his interlocutors ever escaped him. He was as ready to listen as he was to speak. In a mixed party he made it his business to draw the humblest person present into the general circle of conversation, and one and all he set at ease by that charm of manner which springs from genuine kindliness of heart. Many a man who entered the presence of the great statesman in fear and trembling, hardly knowing how to comport himself in the presence of such intellectual superiority, or how to face the ordeal of a conversation with one so powerful, retired with a delightful feeling that he had been spending a cheerful hour with the most agreeable of companions. It was not an art which thus enabled Mr. Gladstone to make men of all ranks and conditions feel at home in his society. It was the result of that spirit of true courtesy and of intense personal humility which was one of the keynotes of his character.

Courtesy and Humility.



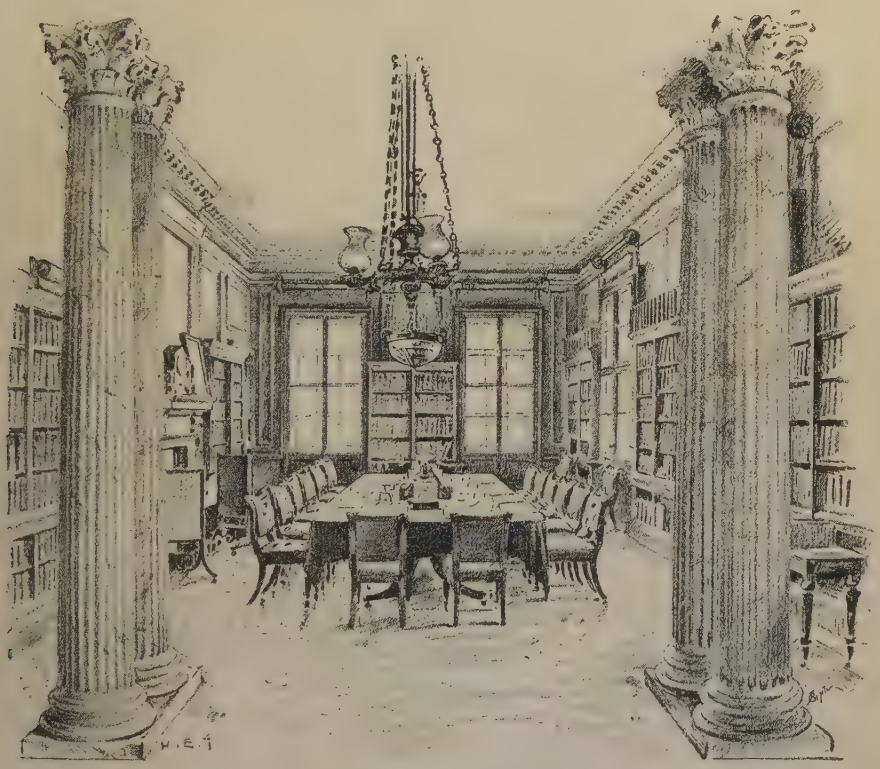
MR. GLADSTONE'S FOURTH CABINET.

But no mistake could be greater than that of supposing that he was one of those men whose courtesy permits liberties to be taken with them, or who can be driven into a course of which they disapprove by mere considerations of personal friendship or social etiquette. Along with this courtesy to all there was a force of character that was almost Napoleonic, and there are some men still living who can recall moments when they trembled before Mr. Gladstone like a schoolboy in the presence of a head master. More than one instance of his power of turning upon an offender and shrivelling him up by the fierce and unexpected blaze of his indignation has been known in society. It would be unfair to give names, yet an instance of this side of Mr. Gladstone's temperament may be recorded. A certain gentleman, in the course of a General Election in which Mr. Gladstone played the leading part, had the misfortune to lose a seat which it had been confidently expected that he would win for the Liberal party. The seat, moreover, had been lost under peculiar circumstances, lost through a division in the Liberal ranks, for which this gentleman was in part responsible. He had considered himself the legitimate representative of the Liberal party, had declined to retire when a Radical of a more advanced order came forward, and the natural consequence had been that a seat manifestly belonging to the Liberals had passed into the keeping of a Conservative. A few days afterwards, Mr. X, the gentleman in question, who felt very sore over his own defeat, and looked to his great leader for sympathy and encouragement, presented himself to Mr. Gladstone at a house where the latter was staying with a party of political friends. Those who were present on the occasion will never forget the manner in which the statesman turned upon the unfortunate intruder, and expressed his astonishment that he should have dared to present himself to him after losing a seat under circumstances so flagrant. The courteous, kindly man whom everybody knew and admired seemed for the moment to be transformed into the general sternly and imperiously rebuking an officer who had turned traitor on the field. This was one of those incidents which must be known in order to arrive at a full understanding of the complex character of Mr. Gladstone. Amid all the gentleness and goodness which characterised him in his conversation and his bearing towards those around him, he was inflexible on some points. In the discharge of his duty he expected loyalty from all around him who professed to be his followers, and when that loyalty was wanting, or when men by acts of folly disappointed the hopes which he had formed of them, he dismissed them from his service with a terrible curtness that the Emperor Napoleon himself could hardly have surpassed.

**Inflexibility and Sternness.**

It would be a complete misconception to suppose that when he was engaged in some great political operation Mr. Gladstone was an easy-

going man, with whom it was possible for his colleagues or his followers to take liberties. He would never have risen to the position he attained and held so long if this had been the case. Wherever he was, wherever he found himself among his political colleagues, they recognised him as their master. Mr. Lowe, despite his own intellectual arrogance, once remarked to a man who was disparaging Mr. Gladstone from the safe distance of his own obscurity: "You know very little about him. We



THE CABINET ROOM, NO. 10, DOWNING STREET.

who are in the same Cabinet with him feel that we are all as children in his presence." It was another very eminent member of more than one of his Cabinets who still survives, who, talking to the present writer of some action by Mr. Gladstone and of the futility of opposing it, said significantly: "You know the fable of the earthen pot and the iron pot. We are all earthen pots when we try to run counter to his wishes." This side of his character must be understood by those who wish to realise the greatness of the man and the way in which he accomplished his work in the world.

Those associated with Mr. Gladstone in official life, his colleagues and subordinates in the Ministry, regarded him not so much as a co-worker with them in a common cause, but as a leader—the general who commanded in a great campaign, and who expected and exacted from his officers the rigorous obedience to orders and devotion to duty that Napoleon demanded from his staff. Again and again have I heard Cabinet Ministers speak of the supremacy he maintained in his relations with his colleagues. Invariably courteous as he was both in public and in private life, in his official work he could at times be an exacting task-master. Many years ago Mr. Childers, who had served under him as First Lord of the Admiralty, Home Secretary, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, spoke to me of his way of taking work, at a moment's notice, out of the hands of a colleague. "Leave this to me," he would say when some difficult question was put in the House of Commons; and the Minister, who, perhaps, had spent hours in preparing an answer to the question, would find himself unceremoniously put on one side. "But then," as Mr. Childers magnanimously remarked, "he nearly always gave a much better answer than I could have done." This habit of his did not grow upon him in later years. In his last Cabinet much of the old imperiousness had passed away. No one was quicker than he was to recognise the fact that the times were changing, and that it was no longer possible that he should hold all the threads in his own hands. In that Cabinet he was ready to defer to his colleagues on most questions, and he left them a degree of freedom in their respective departments such as they had never known before.

An Imperious Leader.

"There are always two men who have a supreme importance in the eyes of Mr. Gladstone," said the late Mr. W. E. Forster one day. "One is the man who can help him most, and the other the man who can hinder him most, in the particular work he has in hand at any moment." This was one of Mr. Forster's shrewdest attempts at analysis of character. It was characteristic of Mr. Gladstone that he should throw himself with all his might into the work he had in hand. There was no detail in connection with that work too small to be neglected, no instrument too obscure to be overlooked. Where was the man who could help him most? He would search the Empire till he found him, and then he would put forth every effort to enlist him in his service. As for the man who could hinder him most, he would find him also; and though he never stooped to any mean arts of cajolery or trickery, he would give himself unrestrainedly to the work of neutralising his antagonist's opposition, even if he could not hope to win him over to his own side.

He was impatient not of opposition so much as of the inability of others to advance as quickly as he did himself along any given line. He would weigh questions of grave importance long and earnestly in the

secrecy of his own mind. No one ever had a greater power of seeing the two opposing sides of any particular subject; and he often found it difficult to arrive at a conclusion as to which side was right. But when once he had made up his mind on this point he hesitated no longer, but went forward with marvellous earnestness and directness on the path which he had

**Enthusiasm and Impetuosity.**

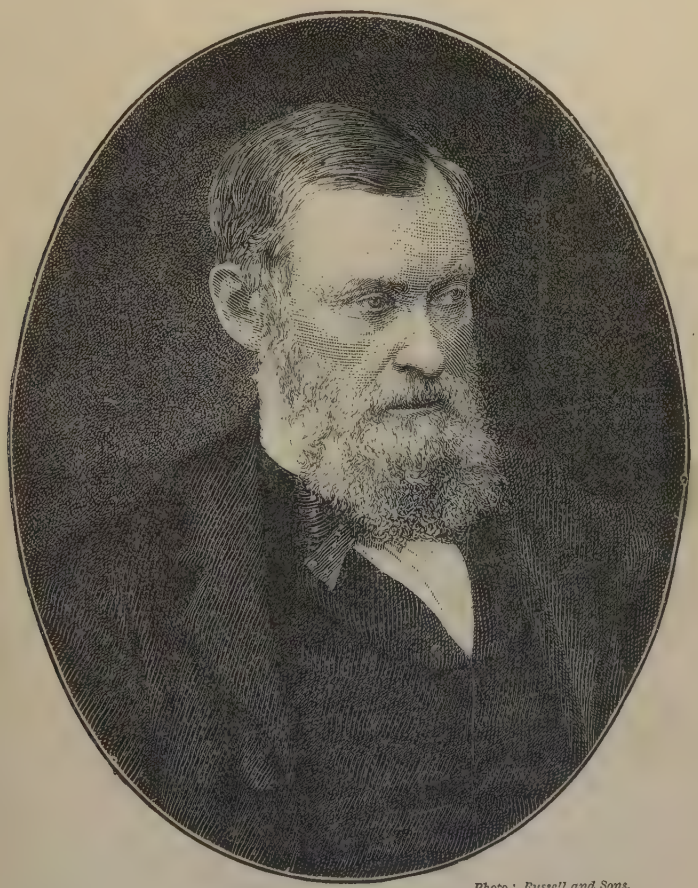


*Photo: Russell and Sons.*

W. E. FORSTER.

decided to take, and he was bitterly disappointed if others did not advance as quickly as he did.

Lord Aberdeen, talking to Bishop Wilberforce in 1855, said, "Gladstone intends to be Prime Minister. He has great qualifications, but some serious defects. The chief is that when he has convinced himself, perhaps

by abstract reasoning, of some view, he thinks everyone else ought to see it at once as he does, and can make no allowance for difference of opinion." There was a great deal of truth in this remark. Mr. Gladstone's enthusiasm and impetuosity, which carried him so far and enabled him to achieve so much, not infrequently carried him far ahead of his comrades. "He will stalk his prey for a long time; but when he sees that it is within his reach he springs like a lion," was the remark of one of his colleagues. Few men are lions, and it is not surprising that he often disconcerted his immediate followers by the leonine force and rapidity of his actions. Nor was it possible to turn him back when he had once made up his mind as to the course which was the proper one for him to take. I ventured one day to ask Mr. Forster, after he had resigned his office in the Ministry of 1880, what his relations had been with Mr. Gladstone. "I learned," he replied, "not only to admire Mr. Gladstone but to love him whilst I was his colleague; and so long as we were acting together no man could have a more loyal chief, or one more resolutely determined to do him justice, than I had in him. But so soon as the moment came when he decided to take another path and to turn his back upon me, he did so with the greatest thoroughness. Henceforward I was nothing to him."

No appreciation of Mr. Gladstone's character would be true or complete which did not take this side of it into account. I have spoken of him as Napoleonic, and those who were nearest to him in public life, and had the best opportunity of studying him at first hand, are agreed that in many respects—in his decision of character, in his courage, in the quickness of his judgment, and in the unfaltering resolution with which he advanced towards the object he had marked out for himself, regardless of all the obstacles that might lie in his path, though never unmindful of the foes who might hang upon his flanks—he had more in him of Napoleon the Great than any other man of his time. The reader will not, I am sure, think that it is to belittle this remarkable man thus to make known some features of his character that may jar upon the popular imagination, and seem at variance with the fancy portrait drawn of him by those who only knew him from afar. Without this strength of will, this unsparing tenacity of purpose, which enabled him to hold on his own way, regardless at once of his own personal interests and of the feelings of his friends, he would never have become what he was, and would never have been the leader of the British people.

It was the recognition of this fact which enabled those whom he used for some public purpose, and having used, relegated to their original obscurity, to bear with equanimity treatment which, at the hands of a smaller man, they would certainly have resented. After all, Napoleon's officers felt more highly honoured by the commissions of danger and importance with which he entrusted them than by the titles and decorations

which an inferior man might have thrust upon them; and even when, as often happened, they had to be sacrificed for the greater good of the public cause, they recognised the fact that it was at the imperious dictates of his own sense of duty that the Emperor left them to their fate. It is no exaggeration to say that throughout his public life Mr. Gladstone was surrounded by a band of adherents whose devotion to their chief was as ardent as that which inspired the staff of the first and greatest of the Bonapartes. They believed in him, admired him, loved him, and were ready to do his bidding at all times and under any circumstances. He seemed to them to be a king among men, and he received from them the loyalty and self-sacrificing devotion which only kings as a rule enjoy. His political opponents were accustomed to sneer at this affectionate and devoted subservience to his wishes on the part of his adherents. They poured contempt and ridicule upon it, and belittled as weak tools and dupes the men who practised it. No doubt, from the point of view of his opponents, something might be said for their estimate of the unswerving loyalty that he was able to command on the part of so many distinguished and upright men. But there is another view of the question which, now that Mr. Gladstone has passed beyond the region of political tumult and faction, will be generally accepted as the true one. That is the view that only a great man, a born leader, has it in his power to command such personal devotion as he inspired. That it was one of the secrets of his success during his prolonged life in the service of his country no one will deny; and there are few, I venture to think, who will dispute the assertion that it was also one of the most signal proofs of the fact that he was himself a man of the highest and rarest qualities, a man endowed with the heart of a hero and the brain of a great leader. The personal fascination which, as I have sought to show, made him supreme in the social circle, was not less conspicuous on the battle-field of party politics. Unique as he was in many aspects of his life and character, there was no matter in which he stood forth in more marked pre-eminence among the crowd of his rivals than in the quality which enabled him thus to rest secure through many changing years in his command of the unswerving and enthusiastic devotion of a band of followers like the men who constituted the staff of the Liberal party during his leadership.

Devotion of Immediate Adherents.

But it was not only over his immediate adherents that he was able to exercise this almost unparalleled influence and personal ascendency. He was never merely the leader of a clique or coterie, though there were periods in the earlier and middle portions of his career when his sway was undoubtedly limited in extent. The more generally he became known to his fellow countrymen the more widely his influence spread, until

Ascendency over the Masses.

at last it was rather his magnetic power over the masses of the people than his ascendency in the councils of the elect few that seemed to be the most prominent feature of his career. Certainly no political leader of the century succeeded in evoking from the great body of the nation the passionate enthusiasm which he was able to draw forth. Men followed and admired Sir Robert Peel, but little personal affection was entertained towards him, even by his more immediate colleagues, and his was never one of those voices that sway the crowd. Lord Palmerston was popular with the middle classes, and was liked and admired by the aristocracy to which he belonged. By the working classes he was distrusted if not positively detested. It was a comparatively mild degree of personal attachment that was inspired by Lord John Russell, even though all Liberals respected him for his virtues. Lord Derby, as the champion of his order and of high Tory principles, could count upon the warm support of his own party. To the masses of the people he was a name and nothing more. Not until the last stage in his wonderful career did Lord Beaconsfield succeed in establishing any kind of personal hold upon the country, and he only did so then as the spokesman of that excess of patriotic fervour which has come to be known among us as Jingoism. Mr. Gladstone's position—one which he maintained unshaken during the lifetime of a whole generation—differed entirely from that of his eminent rivals and predecessors whose names I have mentioned.

In what lay the secret of his power of drawing to himself the intense and enthusiastic devotion of so large a proportion of his fellow-countrymen? The mass of the people had no knowledge of his social gifts, and knew little of his varied and remarkable attainments. Unlike his personal adherents, of whose deep-rooted loyalty I have spoken on a previous page, they had never been "under the spell of the magician," had never experienced the fascination of his personal presence. Comparatively few of them had ever heard the sound of his voice. Yet the fact is not to be denied that for more than thirty years he was, to at least a moiety of the people of Great Britain, the object of an almost passionate devotion. Governments might rise and fall, policies might be adopted or reversed, but he remained secure in the affection of the masses. Even at the moment when the inevitable waves of reaction passed over the face of the country, and he found himself the subject of bitter hostility and enmity, he could always rely upon the trust and the loyalty of a good half of the people of this realm. There were always, in every town and in every hamlet, in secluded valleys and on barren moorlands, men and women to whom his name was as the name of no other living man, to whom it represented a personality that seemed to outshine all others. When the political fortunes of his party were at their lowest ebb, this feeling of devotion to the leader was even more remarkable and unmistakable than when he was riding in triumph on the crest of the wave.

*Photo: R. Banks, Manchester.*

MR. GLADSTONE PRESENTING PRIZES AFTER A BAND COMPETITION AT HAWARDEN IN 1896.

It may be said that this was due to the fact that he was the recognised leader of a great historical party. But that party had other leaders before him, and it was not the only party in Great Britain. Yet no leader ever shared his fortune in this matter; none during generations of our national life could count, as he was ever able to do, upon the personal devotion of vast masses of the people. Wherein lay the secret of this unrivalled gift? Personal magnetism is the ready answer of most persons to a question like this; and there cannot be any doubt that the magnetic man is the only man who can really prove a successful leader. But the term is too vague to satisfy curiosity. It is easy to *feel* the magnetism of some gifted and favoured individual, it is impossible to describe it. For the secret of Mr. Gladstone's hold upon the masses of his fellow countrymen, we must look beyond this indefinable quality. Nearly twenty years ago, at a dinner party at the house of a well-known man of letters, a distinguished company was discussing the points of resemblance and unlikeness between Mr. Gladstone and his great rival, Lord Beaconsfield. Said some one, "Lord Beaconsfield was always a keen judge of men; Mr. Gladstone on the other hand is always making mistakes in his estimates of individual character." To this another replied, "Well, if Mr. Gladstone cannot judge men, he understands mankind." There was a poet present at the dinner-table, one who had known Mr. Gladstone ever since his University days, the late Lord Houghton. He promptly reduced the discussion to an epigram which deserves to be remembered:

Knowledge of Mankind.

> "We spoke of two high names of speech and pen;
> How each was seeing, and how each was blind;
> Knew not mankind, but keenly knew all men;
> Knew nought of men, but knew and *loved* mankind."

I have ventured to print one word in these lines in italics, because when Lord Houghton did me the favour of repeating them to me he laid special emphasis on that one word. It seems to me that it furnishes, in part at least, the clue to Mr. Gladstone's hold upon his fellow-creatures. Disraeli, the brilliant, the acute, the cynical, was a wonderful judge of character, and it was difficult indeed for an impostor to pass muster before him. Gladstone, the enthusiast, the optimist, the believer in his fellow-creatures, was not infrequently deceived in his judgment of the individual men with whom he came in contact. It was often, indeed, urged against him as a matter of reproach that he selected incompetent or unworthy assistants and instruments. But if he was a bad judge of the individual, he had an unrivalled knowledge of and love for mankind at large. There was nothing cynical in his estimate of his fellow-creatures. The deep religious faith which burned within him preserved him from the scornful egotism of a Disraeli. For mankind at large, for the great toiling,

suffering mass which forms the bulk of every community, he had the sympathetic affection which distinguishes the man who believes that "mankind is one in spirit," and who refuses to allow the exterior conditions of birth or accident to create barriers between those who, whether they be poor or rich, cultured or unlettered, are after all fellow-travellers on a common pilgrimage from the cradle to the grave.

I repeat that in parts at least it was because the multitude recognised this feature in Mr. Gladstone's character that it was quick to return the love that he bestowed upon his fellow-creatures; for there is nothing that attracts love like love. Nowadays it is difficult to realise the fact that in the year 1866 Mr. Gladstone was bitterly denounced by the critics of the day because he had so far forgotten himself as to speak in the House of Commons of the working-men of England as being of "our own flesh and blood." The working-classes were at that time without the franchise and beyond the pale. Mr. Gladstone was the first statesman of his position in the political world thus to hold out to them the hand of brotherhood. It would have been strange indeed if in after days they had not remembered this fact.

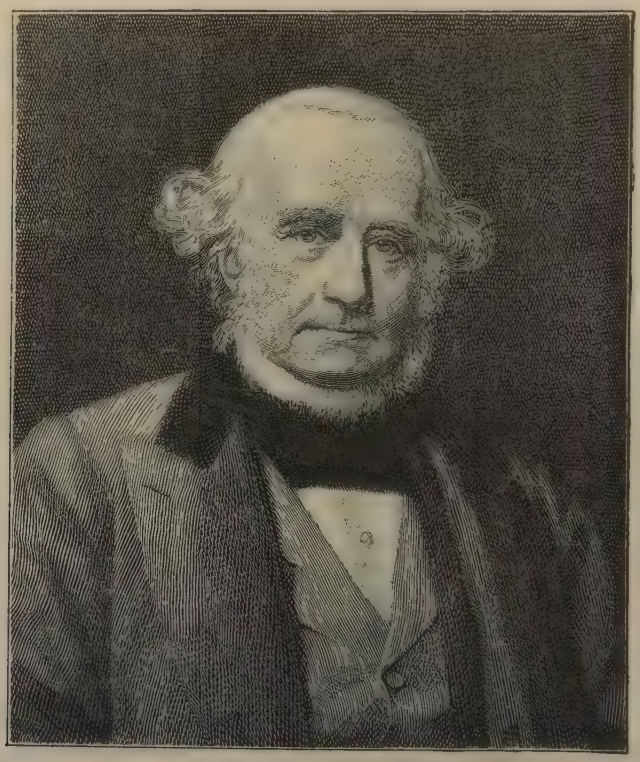
**Love Attracting Love.**

It was not love only, however, that characterised the feelings of Mr. Gladstone towards the mass of his fellow-creatures. He believed in them. He was convinced that they too had the same moral nature as himself, and that he could appeal with just as much hope of success to their sense of right and wrong, to their love of truth and justice, their hatred of falsehood and oppression, as to the same feelings in the breasts of any other order in society. It was, I think, this faith in our common humanity even more than his love for mankind at large that secured for him his unique and splendid place in the affections of so many of his fellow-creatures. It would be out of place at this point to illustrate this feature of his character. The reader who follows his career in the subsequent chapters of this biography will have the opportunity of seeing for himself how often he addressed a fervent appeal to the moral sense of his fellow-countrymen, how constantly he strove to raise their eyes from merely material issues to those things unseen, "eternal in the heavens," which are after all of immeasurably greater importance than matters of pounds and pence. Herein, I take it, was to be found the true secret of that bond of sympathy which united him to the masses of his fellow-creatures, and which inspired so many, who had never looked upon his face or heard his voice, with so true and reverential an affection for his name.

**Faith in Humanity.**

It is time, however, to return to those more personal traits which must be brought home to the reader's mind if he is to form a true picture of the man himself. Amid all the engrossment of his busy life of public work, Mr. Gladstone found time for recreation, both physical and mental. His keen enjoyment of society has already been noted. There was one

notable London institution with which he had been long connected, and where for several decades he was a striking figure. This was Grillion's Club. To the world at large Grillion's Club is unknown; yet to the insiders in the high world of public life in London there is no institution



THE FIRST LORD HOUGHTON.
(*After the Portrait by R. Lehmann.*)

more familiar. Grillion's Club is a little society founded at the beginning of the present century for the purpose of allowing the leading members of both political parties to meet together at a board from which the bitterness of political controversy is absolutely excluded. It has most admirably served this purpose for more than fourscore years. At the hospitable board of Grillion's such men as the Earl of Derby, when Prime Minister, and Lord John Russell, when leader of the Opposition, were able to meet in friendly intercourse, even when they were most bitterly opposed to each other on public questions. Later in the day, Mr. Gladstone found at Grillion's a meeting-place where he could exchange ideas with

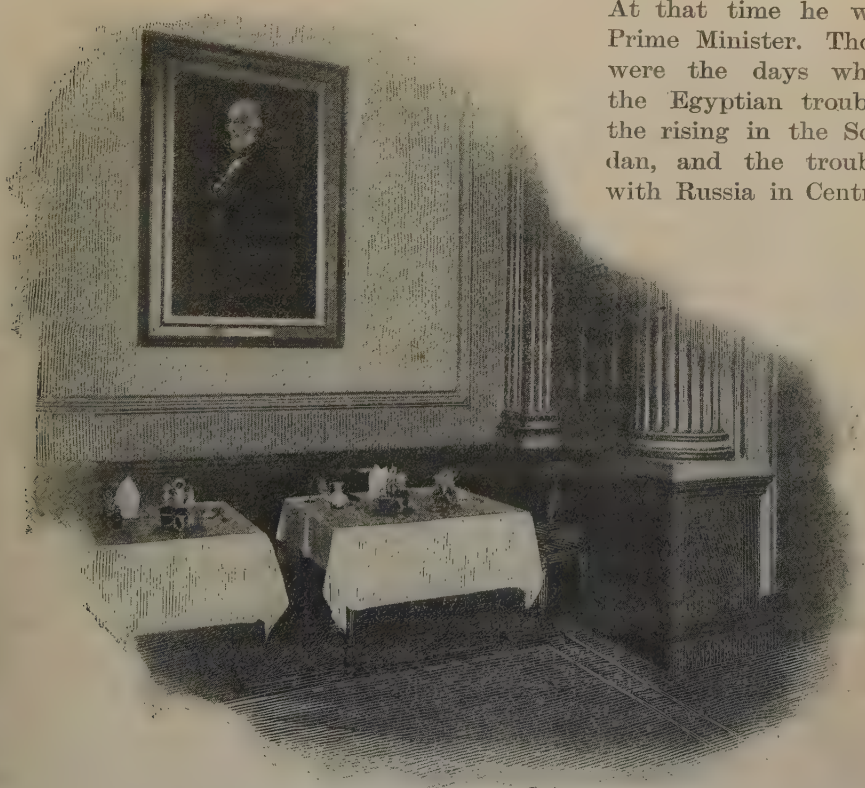
**A Member of Grillion's.**

men of eminence the most widely separated from him in opinion. For many years he was one of its most constant frequenters.

The club meets in a London hotel on certain evenings during the Session, when those members who are in town dine together. Each is chairman and vice-chairman in rotation, and it is the duty of the chairman to make an entry in the club minutes of the guests present and of the wine drunk. Once or twice in the course of its history it has happened that only one member has been present at dinner, and these occasions have always been regarded by the club as notable. One of these solitary dinners, when the company was confined to the chairman of the day, was on April 27th, 1883. Mr. Gladstone was the solitary diner, and according to rule he entered his name in the club book with the official intimation that he had been served with "one bottle of champagne." To this record he added the following lines:—

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

At that time he was Prime Minister. Those were the days when the Egyptian trouble, the rising in the Soudan, and the trouble with Russia in Central



THE GLADSTONE PORTRAIT AT THE REFORM CLUB.

Asia engaged the thoughts of all. There were some members of Grillion's Club who when they read the lines I have quoted above wondered what the thoughts of the great minister were as he consumed his solitary dinner. One of these was his old friend the late Lord Houghton, who was the official Poet-Laureate of the club. Lord Houghton celebrated Mr. Gladstone's lonely meal in the following lines:—

"Trace we the workings of that wondrous brain,
Warmed by one bottle of our dry champagne;
Guess down what streams those active fancies wander
Nile or Ilissus? Oxus or Scamander?
Sees he, as lonely knife and fork he plies,
Muscovite lances—Arab assegais?
Or patient till the foods and feuds shall cease.
Waits his dessert—the blessed fruits of peace?
Yes, for while penning this impartial verse,
We know that when (as mortals must) he errs,
'Tis not from motive of imperious mind,
But from a nature which will last till death,
Of love-born faith that grows to over-faith,
Till reason and experience both grow blind
To th' evil and unreason of mankind."

It is not superfluous to note the character of the tribute thus paid by the most exclusive and exalted intellectual circle in London to the virtues of Mr. Gladstone. Grillion's was, I believe, the only club that he really frequented. He left the Carlton and Conservative clubs, under circumstances which can hardly be recalled by the members of those distinguished bodies with pleasure, at the time when he ceased to be a member of the Conservative party. Subsequently the members of the Reform Club altered their rules for the special purpose of enabling the committee to elect him to that body. But he made very little use of the club during his membership, and on the occasion of his retirement from the leadership of the Liberal party in 1875, he gave up the club altogether. The one London club of which he retained his membership to the end was the old United University Club in Suffolk Street. Here, even when he was Prime Minister, he might occasionally be seen of an afternoon drinking tea. But he was certainly not a club man in the ordinary sense of the word. He was too constantly occupied to find leisure for the clubman's hour of gossip, whilst he was at the same time too conspicuous a figure upon the stage of public life to be able to frequent a club without having to run the risk of some occasional encounter of an unpleasant or embarrassing character. To Grillion's he remained true all through his active career; but he cannot be said to have had any other resort of the same description.

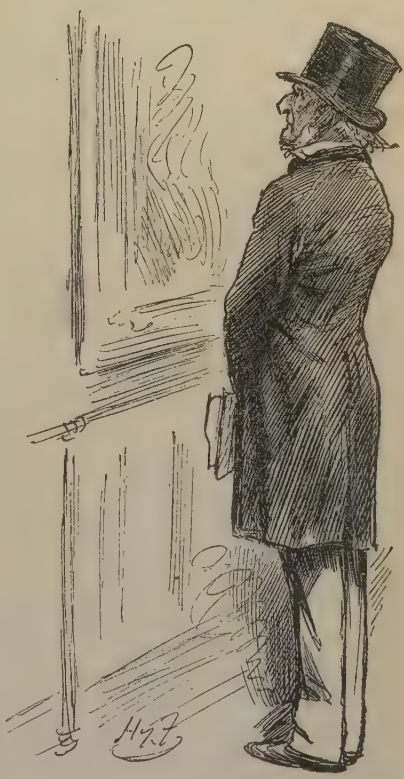
He had the love of artistic objects of the educated and capable amateur. His collection of china, made when he was still a comparatively young man, was remarkably fine, and on its sale by auction it yielded

him a large sum of money. He had a great love of pictures, and was often to be seen in earlier days among the frequenters of the great auction rooms in King Street, St. James's; whilst almost to the last he was a visitor at the private views of the Royal Academy, and might be seen moving from picture to picture, catalogue in hand, so manifestly absorbed in his task that only the boldest or most intimate of his friends dared to accost him. For music he may almost be said to have had a passion. In his younger days he sang well, and often delighted some social company by his rendering, in the full, beautiful voice whose tones were so well known to the House of Commons, of some popular song. The contemporaries of his early manhood have recorded the fact that he was very fond of negro songs, and often sang them at the dinner-parties he attended.

Artistic Tastes.

But as the years passed his intellectual pleasures became more and more purely literary in their character. "Light, more light," seemed to be the never-failing cry of those years in which the first failure of his marvellous physical powers became manifest. Knowledge, and ever more knowledge, and yet more, was the demand of his imperious mind. He spent his time in acquiring books and in reading them. No figure was more familiar than his to the dealers in old books in London. He would spend hours poring over their well-thumbed stores, not disdaining even the poorest collection. The catalogues of second-hand booksellers were sent to him from all parts of the country, and he read them all eagerly. Thus it came about that he acquired a really fine and valuable library at Hawarden. Of how he placed that library freely at the service of students in St. Deiniol's hostel there is no need that I should speak here. The reader must note, however, how the active politician was at the same time the ardent lover of books.

Forming a Library.



AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY: A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

His physical recreations have become known to everybody. In early

life he was fond of shooting; but after losing one of his fingers through the explosion of his gun, he gave up that form of sport, and I am not aware that he ever adopted any other. In later life he even gave up riding, and restricted himself to walking and tree-felling as his means of physical recreation. No account of Mr. Gladstone would be complete that did not deal with his love of walking. All through his life he retained his love for this form of exercise, and he practised it just as regularly in London as in the country. Indeed, it was said that he walked more in the streets than in his own park. In the busiest periods of his busy life, when he was the head of a Government or engaged in that most arduous of all tasks, the formation of a Cabinet, he would find time for a long walk daily even if he had to snatch it from the hours that should have been given to sleep. After an exciting debate in the House of Commons, perhaps after a critical division, he would leave New Palace Yard with a hurried step, and set out on a tramp that might carry him as far as Hampstead Heath and not bring him back to Downing Street until far in the night. Occasionally he caused uneasiness to his family by his determination to gratify this passion for pedestrian exercise at all hazards. Once during the sad days of coercion and outrage, when the Ministers of the Crown were being watched day and night by detectives in order to protect them from the plots of men like those who had slain Lord Frederick Cavendish, there was something like a panic in Downing Street. The Prime Minister was missing. He had left the House of Commons at midnight, followed as usual by a detective. Between Palace Yard and Downing Street he had disappeared suddenly and mysteriously. The times were critical, and

**Love of Walking.**

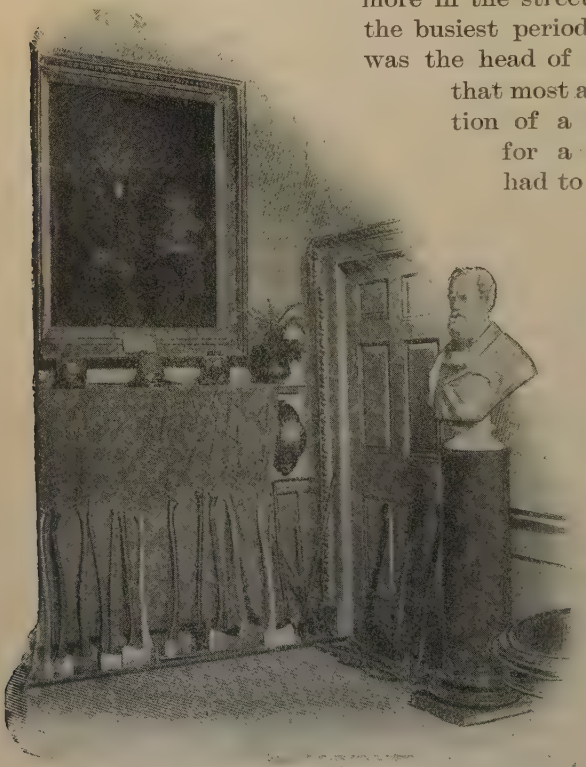


*Photo: Robinson and Thompson, Liverpool.*

SOME OF MR. GLADSTONE'S AXES IN THE ENTRANCE HALL OF HAWARDEN CASTLE.

*Photo: Poulton and Son, Lee, S.E.*

A FAMILY GROUP AT HAWARDEN.

for hours there was not a little alarm, not only in the Premier's residence but at Scotland Yard, as to his fate. In the early dawn Mr. Gladstone quietly entered the official residence by the garden door. He had been on a walk beyond Highgate, and was astonished to hear of the alarm excited by his absence.

This habit of constantly walking about London not only gave him an almost unrivalled knowledge alike of the highways and byways of the metropolis, but made him for years a most familiar figure in its streets. Everybody seemed to know him, above all everybody whose life was lived in the open-air. Policemen, cabmen, crossing-sweepers, loafers, and loungers of every description recognised him instantly as he passed along with his swift, firm step and steady, concentrated gaze. And wherever he was to be seen, he was an object of interest. To a former generation the Duke of Wellington was the only man—outside the narrow bounds of royalty—in whom all the world of London took an interest, and whom people ran to see when they heard that he was passing. In the eyes of the later generation, Mr. Gladstone held the place which their forefathers gave to the great duke. Many legends naturally grew up in connection with his love of the streets. It is only necessary to touch upon one of those legends here. All through his life he had a great pity for the outcasts of our towns, the sad wreckage of our social system; and whenever he could hold out a helping hand to these victims of man's depravity, he did so, with a fearlessness that was at once characteristic of his courage and proof of his own conscious purity. To those who knew him best, and who had the fullest means of knowing the truth as to all that he did, this chivalrous regard for the outcast and the sinner has always seemed to be one of Mr. Gladstone's noblest attributes. Once upon a time a wretched creature who found him listening to and relieving a tale of woe threatened to "expose" him unless he paid blackmail. Mr. Gladstone sprang like a lion upon his assailant, handed him over to the police, and in the full consciousness of his own innocence faced the publicity which so many weaker men would have striven to shirk. After that incident, none but the foolish or the foul-minded professed to cherish any doubt as to the purity of the benevolence which led him to stretch out a helping hand to so many who would have been helpless but for the aid which they received from him.

**Compassion for Outcasts.**

Very interesting was it in his later days to hear him talk of the London of his youth—the London before railways, or hansom cabs, or good pavements. Throughout his life a keen observer, his memory was stored with little points of facts that would be of immense interest now, if he had but left them upon record. Talking of some famous street in Mayfair or St. James's, he could tell his interlocutor who were the notable persons who

**Knowledge of Bygone London.**

lived there in the days of the last two kings. Pointing to some row of stately modern mansions, he would conjure up in a few vivid sentences a picture of the old houses they had replaced. He would almost re-people Pall Mall or Piccadilly with the distinguished men of sixty years ago. Nothing seemed to have escaped his wonderful powers of observation and his extraordinary memory. I once asked him whether he thought the London fogs were as bad in our time as they had been in his youth. "No," he said; "we very seldom have a fog now like the black, horrible fogs I remember fifty years ago, when you could *feel* the darkness that settled around you; but it strikes me that we have now in winter in London a more constant gloom than we had in the old days. It lasts longer through the season, and though it is seldom so bad in quality there is distinctly more of it."

It will be seen that Mr. Gladstone, who could claim some connection with so many different towns and cities, from Dingwall to Liverpool and Oxford, was really by his knowledge and his instincts a Londoner. Certainly no Prime Minister of this country, not even Lord Beaconsfield, knew all the many phases of London life as he did. Alas! I remember towards the close of his life, when he was leaving town on a journey, I had the privilege of conducting him on foot for a part of the way to the railway station. "I need shepherding now, even in the streets of London, which I used to know so well!" was the remark that he made in his rich, deep voice. One felt then that the end could not be far off.

It is time, however, to touch lightly upon that which was, in the opinion of those who knew him best through many changing years, the real key to his character. I refer to his strong devotional spirit, his love of religion. In another chapter something will be said of Mr. Gladstone as a theologian; whilst his share in the many religious movements of his time will be duly set forth in his biography. That he played a great part in many religious and ecclesiastical controversies, and that he had in him the makings of a great theologian, was admitted by everybody. But it is to the intensely religious spirit which seemed to his friends to animate him in all things, great as well as small, that I am referring here. It is a subject to be touched upon with reverence and delicacy, for nothing is easier than to picture the religious feeling of a genuinely devout man in such a manner as to excite disgust rather than admiration. Of Mr. Gladstone it may be said with perfect sincerity, and without any tinge of religious pretentiousness, that he was a spiritually-minded man. His friends knew how constantly throughout his whole life, from his college days, when it was noted that he read the Bible regularly, to the close of his career, his thoughts seemed to be as much with the unseen and eternal as with the seen and temporal. It was no secret to those who were nearest to him that he found in earnest private

**Piety the key to his character.**

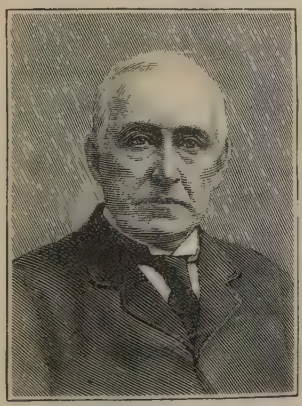
prayer the best of all preparations for his public duties. Many a time when he had a great speech to make and he sat in silent self-absorption on the Treasury Bench, his friends knew from the veiled motion of his lips that he was seeking strength and wisdom from Heaven. It would offend signally against good taste to dwell upon these things here. Nothing would have been more obnoxious to his own sense of what was proper and to his profound feeling of personal humility than to blazon forth these deepest secrets of his soul. But those who wish to know what Mr. Gladstone really was must bear in mind the fact that he was essentially and deeply religious, and that prayer was throughout his life a comfort and a consolation to him. It was not merely in public worship that he delighted, though so long as his health and strength permitted he never neglected that duty. His religion, as all who were brought in contact with him knew, was the religion not of outward observances but of the heart. People sometimes wondered that a man who was so staunch and outspoken in his allegiance to the Church of England, and to that section of it which is commonly called "High," should have won, as he undoubtedly did, the affection and the confidence of the Nonconformists of Great Britain. Never before did they tender to a leader the loyal and almost passionate devotion which they showed during many years to Mr. Gladstone. The secret of that devotion was to be found in their recognition of the fact that with him all truths and all the things of this world rested upon a spiritual basis, and were viewed in their relationship to the things of the spiritual world.

Many anecdotes could be told in connection with this side of Mr. Gladstone's character; but to tell them would only be to vulgarise a subject which may fairly be called sacred. There is one scene, however, in his closing days, described to me by an eye-witness, that may be mentioned here because of its pathos and because he himself was all unconscious of the fact that his action was being noted. On that anxious evening in the middle of February, 1898, when he left the Villa Thorenc at Cannes to return to England, he knew as well as those about him did that he was going home to die. In spite of his weakness and his physical sufferings, he was serene and cheerful in his bearing, and nothing was allowed to escape his lips that could add to the grief and anxiety of his friends and relations. When he reached the outer porch of the house which had sheltered him during more than two months of pain and sorrow, he turned round and faced it. The eagle eye lighted up once more as it swept over the faces of his friends, from the owner of the sumptuous mansion down to the humblest of the domestics who had waited upon him; and then, as though moved by an inspiration that he could not resist, he reverently uncovered his head, and in a low, solemn voice prayed to God that the house and all in it might be blessed of Him,

**An Incident of his Last Days.**

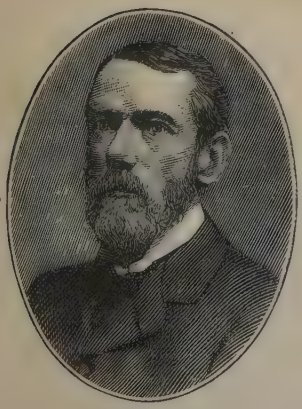
1 SIR ALGERNON WEST, K.C.B.

2 SIR EDWARD HAMILTON, K.C.B.



3 LORD WELBY, G.C.B.

4 MR. HORACE SEYMOUR.



5 SIR ARTHUR GODLEY, K.C.B.

6 MR. G. H. MURRAY, C.B.

## GROUP OF MR. GLADSTONE'S SECRETARIES.

*Photos* 1, 3, *and* 5 *by Russell and Sons, Baker Street, W.; 2, by Mavll and Fox, Piccadilly, W.; 4, by Bassano, Old Bond Street, W.; 6, by Mayall and Co., Lim., Piccadilly, W.*

whilst he rendered up his heartfelt thanks to the Almighty for all the love and kindness that had been lavished upon him whilst he dwelt within its walls. "He did not forget anyone, not even the servants," said to me one who watched the pathetic scene with eyes brimming over with tears. What Mr. Gladstone was at that solemn moment, when he stood almost within the shadow of the tomb, he had been, as all who knew him could testify, alike during the hot days of his youth, during his manhood of unexampled effort and achievement, and during his serene and beautiful old age. Emphatically it may be said of him, if ever it could be said of any man who has risen high in the service of the State, that his heart was anchored in the sanctuary of the Most High.

He who would paint the portrait of such a man as Mr. Gladstone must have many colours upon his palette. In what I have just written of his religious life and the strong moral basis of his character, I have been describing qualities certain to secure the admiration of all right-minded persons. No question of political opinion can interfere with that admiration, and Mr. Gladstone, the friend of humanity, the devout servant of God, has won for himself a place in the hearts of his bitterest opponents hardly inferior to that which he holds in those of his most ardent admirers. But there are other sides to this remarkable character, and no biographer can pass them by. More than a dozen years ago the late Mr. Forster brought a storm of anger upon himself because, in referring to Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, he had spoken of that wonderful power which he possessed of "persuading himself" of the truth of any principle which he enunciated. Mr. Forster, as the present writer can testify from personal knowledge, had not the smallest intention of imputing anything in the nature of insincerity to Mr. Gladstone. Nothing could have been further from his desire. His words, although they might perhaps have been chosen with greater care, had reference to that wonderful power of hair-splitting which Mr. Gladstone's keen mind possessed. He was a great casuist, and his ability to see distinctions too subtle to catch the eye of the commonplace sometimes exposed him to the charge of conscious insincerity. Yet no charge could have been more untrue. It was part of the penalty he had to pay for the peculiar organisation of his mind that he was able to see the many facets of a truth with equal distinctness, and that he could thus refine and over-refine when stating some principle which a smaller man would have conveyed in simple and unmistakable language. His secretaries, who naturally knew him better than most men, and of whom it is to be said that they were without exception the most ardent of his admirers, could tell many a story illustrating this peculiar side of Mr. Gladstone's genius. Some of them have declared that they needed to learn the English language afresh in order to comprehend the

A Casuist.

subtleties which he introduced into his interpretation of words and phrases. It was this remarkable power of dealing with language that gave a certain degree of colour to the charge, so often brought against Mr. Gladstone, that he was always able to find a way of escape for himself from any dilemma in which he might have been placed by his own utterances. The truth is that he was always cautious in statement, even when he appeared to be most rash. He measured his words with the deliberation and the care with which a chemist measures his most potent drugs; and often those who thought that he had at last committed himself to some extreme proposition, found upon closer examination of his declarations that they were hedged and qualified in such a manner as to deprive them of the precise character they had attributed to them. No biographer will pretend to regard this particular quality of Mr. Gladstone's mind as being in itself admirable. But when taken in connection with his other intellectual qualities, it will be found to be the necessary complement of some of the noblest features of his character. An enthusiast and an optimist, he would again and again have plunged into dangerous depths, and have carried his party with him, if it had not been for that subtlety of intellect, that distinct turn for casuistry, which enabled him to limit even his most impassioned utterances in such a manner as to save him from anything in the nature of a catastrophe. Honest in purpose and intention he always was; nor was his honesty less absolute in the manner in which he expressed himself. But those who dealt with him and those who read his speeches or his letters, if they wished to understand his mind aright, had to remember this peculiar feature of his intellect.

**His Essential Consistency.**

Mention has already been made of the charge of inconsistency which at one time was so constantly brought against him. It is not a charge which can survive the publication of the inner secrets of his life. Fifty years ago it was supposed by the outside world that he had been guilty of a great act of folly in resigning office over the question of Maynooth; and when, nearly thirty years later, he brought in his Bill for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the fact was cited as proof of the instability of his character and the inconsistency of his opinions. But in 1845, although he resigned office and imperilled all his future prospects rather than appear to be supporting a policy of which he disapproved, merely because he was a member of the Government which was responsible for that policy, he showed the strong independence of his character by giving as a private member the vote which he refused to give as a Minister. He had changed his mind on the subject of Maynooth and meant to vote under any circumstances for the increased grant; but he had been elected as a strong opponent of that policy, and he knew that if he retained his office in the Government and gave his vote it would

be said that his change of opinion was merely due to his desire to pursue his official career. Seldom has a young man on the threshold of public life made a more serious sacrifice to principle than that which was thus made by Mr. Gladstone. Yet everybody now knows that he had been converted on the question of Maynooth long before his resignation, and that nothing but the very nicest sense of honour made it seem desirable that he should resign. In the same way those who were behind the scenes knew that in attacking the Irish Church Establishment he was following a path along which he had been marching for years. And, in later times, when he made his great departure on the question of Ireland and introduced that measure of Home Rule of which he and his colleagues had been so long the staunch opponents, it was known to the favoured few that he was merely following the irresistible processes of logical conviction and giving effect to opinions which had been slowly but steadily gathering force in his own mind during many previous years. Inconsistency, it will be seen, is not, therefore, a phrase which really applies to Mr. Gladstone's apparent changes of opinion and undoubted changes of policy. Rightly or wrongly, in all those changes he believed that he was advancing nearer to the light, and his conscience compelled him to make that advance, no matter what the cost might be to himself or to his friends.

**Hatred of Oppression.**

Not the least noticeable feature of Mr. Gladstone's character was his strong sympathy with the victims of oppression abroad. From his early youth he had been interested in the sufferings of Italians and Hellenes, and had been ardent in his devotion to their national causes. It was not until he had passed his fortieth year, however, that he was able to give active assistance in the great struggle of the Latin people against the despots of the Continent. The help he gave to the Neapolitans in their effort to free themselves from a merciless bondage has never been forgotten by the grateful Italians. Undoubtedly his ardent appeal to the conscience of Europe had much to do with the attitude of England when the time came for Garibaldi to raise his sword and strike at the oppressor, and that fact was recognised by the Italian hero himself when, on meeting Mr. Gladstone at Stafford House during his remarkable visit to this country, he hailed him with the simple word "*Précurseur!*"

Even more remarkable than his championship of the cause of the oppressed Neapolitans was his emphatic rebuke of Lord Palmerston in the Don Pacifico debate. Lord Palmerston, appealing to the strongest prejudices of our race, had declared that a British subject, wherever he might be found, must be able to feel that he was protected by the watchful eye and strong arm of England. *Civis Romanus sum* was to be the charm safeguarding him as it had safeguarded the Roman

THE MEETING BETWEEN MR. GLADSTONE AND GARIBALDI.

citizen of old. The House was easily carried away by this high-sounding appeal to its patriotism and its selfishness. Yet Mr. Gladstone ventured even then to throw himself against the stream of popular passion, and to rebuke Lord Palmerston for pandering to our besetting faults and weaknesses in place of trying to restrain them. Instead of this cry of *Civis Romanus sum* he declared that we as the strong ought frankly to recognise the equality of the weak, the principle of brotherhood among nations, and that of their sacred independence. "Let us do as we would be done by, and let us pay all respect to a feeble state, and to the infancy of free institutions, which we should desire and should exact from others, towards their maturity and their strength." Here spoke the Gladstone against whose policy in later years all the forces of national selfishness were so frequently arrayed. In this matter, at least, the most superficial must admit that the charge of inconsistency cannot be brought against him.

As he began his active intervention in the affairs of other Powers with his attempt to open the dungeons of Naples, so he closed that intervention with the fervent appeal he addressed in his last public speech to the conscience of England on behalf of the victims of Turkish cruelty and oppression. Whatever changes came over his views upon questions of domestic policy, it is clear that from first to last there was no change in his hatred of the oppressor, in his sympathy with the oppressed, in his burning desire that the might of England should be put forth on behalf of the victims of cruelty and wrongdoing throughout the world. Nor was he without his reward. If in Great Britain his name was regarded as a party watchword, elsewhere throughout the world it had a higher significance. No Englishman of modern times was more highly honoured than Mr. Gladstone in Italy. In Russia he was recognised as the true friend of the peace of Europe, the enlightened statesman who could best forward the common aims of the great rivals of East and West; and in America, despite the error into which he fell with regard to the South—an error long since acknowledged and repented of—he was admired as no other Englishman of our time has been, with the single exception of Mr. Bright. The judgment of outsiders has often been likened to the judgment of posterity, and those who have most faith in the ultimate place of Mr. Gladstone on the roll of history will find encouragement for their hopes in the place which he already occupies in the minds of the people of other countries.

**His Eloquence.**

I have said nothing so far with regard to one of the most important elements of Mr. Gladstone's public life, his eloquence. Nowadays it is only too true that even the ablest minds fail to influence their fellow-men in public affairs where the gift of eloquence is denied. Shakespeare himself would cut an indifferent figure in the House of Commons if he were not able at times to speak in

such a way as to rouse and move the audience he addressed. Mr. Gladstone from his earliest years enjoyed this great gift of public speech. His speaking, which so deeply moved the young men of the Oxford Union, steadily improved until he was long past his physical prime. Yet it cannot be said that his eloquence had any classic qualities, or that as an

IN THE 'SIXTIES: A SKETCH IN THE HOUSE.

orator he could be compared to other men who in all other respects were his inferiors. What is true of his public speech is the fact that he possessed the marvellous power of persuading, convincing, and moving men in an almost unexampled degree. One does not recall any passages in his great speeches that would compare with some that might easily be gathered from the speeches of his distinguished contemporary, Mr. Bright. The

form in which his thoughts were expressed was too easy and too voluminous to make his speeches models of literary eloquence. Too often his flights of rhetoric were marred by this redundancy of words It was not so much to the speech that men listened when he spoke as to the speaker. It was the spirit that burned through all his utterances, the unquenchable flame of enthusiasm that seemed to glitter before the eyes as one listened to him, that touched the hearts of his audience and carried them away in a manner which those who merely read the speeches in the cold black and white of print find it difficult to understand. Yet no one who has heard him often at his prime would think for a moment of belittling his eloquence. It may not have been based upon the best of models, but it sufficed for what it was. It was a direct appeal to the hearts, the consciences, the intellects of those whom he addressed; and no advocate of our times was ever more successful than Mr. Gladstone in reaching the goal at which he thus aimed. I have seen men sit silent and spellbound whilst Mr. Bright has been pouring forth one of his noble orations. But not even Mr. Bright possessed the power of kindling the enthusiasm of a crowded audience which Mr. Gladstone had at his command. Those who were in the House of Commons from 1860 to 1870 had the best opportunities of understanding what he was as a public speaker. It was then that he found himself almost daily confronted by his great rival, Mr. Disraeli. Night after night the duel between these opposing forces was renewed, and only those who witnessed that prolonged contest of genius can understand its fascination. Disraeli, wielding his rapier with infinite dexterity and absolute disregard for the rules of the duel, succeeded again and again in inflicting some nasty cuts upon his antagonist. Mr. Gladstone's eloquence was not that of the rapier, but that of the broadsword; and when that mighty weapon flashed down amid the thunderous applause of his supporters upon the head of his antagonist, it seemed as though the latter must be annihilated. Humour, sarcasm, passion, pathos, all seemed to bubble in turn from his lips. But through it all there was the overmastering feeling that behind this outpouring of words lay strong convictions and solid arguments founded upon a deep sense of the moral government of the universe.

**A Great Speech.**

It was in dealing with questions more directly connected with religion, indeed, that Mr. Gladstone's eloquence reached its highest level. His speech in 1883 on what was commonly called the Bradlaugh Relief Bill has been constantly cited by those who heard him as the finest of all his utterances. None who were present in the House on that memorable occasion, and saw the great advocate of orthodox religion pleading with impassioned eloquence for the relief of the disability which attached to an infidel, will ever forget the spectacle. Here was Mr. Gladstone, in the sacred interests of justice, thrusting his own strongest prepossessions and prejudices aside, and

A FAVOURITE GESTURE.

*(A Sketch in the House.)*

pleading for the admission to Parliament of a man whose convictions upon religious subjects were absolutely abhorrent to him. It was after that speech that Mr. Bradlaugh himself, meeting Mr. Gladstone's son in the lobby of the House, burst into tears as he stammered out his sense of gratitude for the championship he had received at the hands of one whom he might naturally have regarded as his foremost opponent.

**His Expository Power.**

In one class of speech Mr. Gladstone was absolutely pre-eminent. No member of Parliament of the present century possessed his power of making a complicated statement to the House in such a manner as not only to interest his audience from first to last, but to enable them to understand all the details of some vast scheme which he was unfolding to them. His great Budget speeches first made him famous as a Parliamentary orator. Never before had Budgets been expounded at such length, and yet never before had the Budget speech been so full of absorbing interest. With the skill of an artist Mr. Gladstone marshalled his figures and facts, each in its right perspective, bringing out the salient points with an emphasis that prevented the auditor from losing sight of them, no matter what number of small details had to be crowded around them. It was said of Macaulay that he made his History of England as interesting as a novel. It might be said with equal truth of Mr. Gladstone that he could make a Budget speech as fascinating as a romance. The manner in which he linked the facts and figures with which he was dealing to great questions affecting the life of the whole community or of the whole human race, proved that it was not the mere financier but the statesman who was handling the subject. With his subtle intellect he could discover moral elements even in a Budget, and could draw lessons for the guidance of the human race even from the figures of our imports and exports. Having heard during many years many of his greatest speeches, the present writer may be allowed to express his own conviction that of all those speeches the most remarkable was that delivered in the House of Commons in 1870 on the introduction of the first Irish Land Bill. Never had a more complicated subject than this been presented to Parliament; yet Mr. Gladstone succeeded in disentangling the Gordian knot, and in presenting all the many threads of his story to the House in such a manner that each was intelligible. There was an old reporter in the House of Commons in those days who had long been notorious for the contemptuous estimate he had formed of Mr. Gladstone. That speech of 1870 converted even this gentleman. For scores of years he had been present at the debates in Parliament, and he frankly admitted that in all his time he had heard nothing like this. "By G——!" he exclaimed, with emphasis, as Mr. Gladstone sat down, "this is simply wonderful; I never knew the fellow had it in him!" In this respect certainly, in clear exposition of

complicated facts, no Parliamentary speaker of our time was comparable to Mr. Gladstone.

The object of this opening chapter in the life of the great statesman has been to bring together from direct personal observation some of those varied traits of Mr. Gladstone's remarkable and most versatile character and genius which must be understood if the life as a whole is to be judged intelligently. I have ventured to draw not merely from sources known to the public, but from my personal recollections and from the reminiscences of friends. No character of our time presents greater difficulties to the biographer than that of Mr. Gladstone. I have striven to show in how many different aspects that character was unique. I have not omitted all reference to its deficiencies; but I shall have failed in my object if I have not made it clear to the reader that the very defects of Mr. Gladstone's nature were in a great measure the outcome of his virtues. His ambition, his love of power, his imperiousness when engaged in a political campaign, the subtle casuistry which had so great an attraction for him, all these were directly connected with his strong sense of duty, his belief that he had his task in the world to do, and that it was his duty to do it with all his might. One would have liked to linger longer upon so fascinating a theme, and to have spoken of that self-control which even at the most critical moments of his life never seemed to desert him. Everybody is probably familiar with that picture of how he sat on the Treasury Bench on the night on which his Government fell in 1885, calmly writing his usual letter to the Queen, whilst Lord Randolph Churchill was leading the triumphant Tories below the gangway opposite in an unprecedented outburst of almost vulgar jubilation. Mr. Gladstone was always great enough to meet the buffetings of adverse fortune with a calm heart and a smiling countenance. Once only during his threescore years of Parliamentary life did his self-possession and self-control fail him. It was on that night in June, 1886, when his first Home Rule Bill was rejected by a majority of thirty. The blow was an almost unexpected one, for down to the last moment it had been hoped that the dissentient Liberals would accept the compromise offered them with regard to the Bill, and vote for the second reading with a view to its amendment in Committee. When one of Mr. Gladstone's most important colleagues went to him in his room behind the Speaker's chair after the division, he was astonished to find that he was suffering from an irrepressible emotion. The tears were in his eyes and his voice was broken, as he acknowledged that the defeat meant the marring of the last great work to which he had consecrated his declining years. This, however, was the only occasion on which any man who stood near him throughout his Parliamentary career saw him wince under a stroke of ill fortune and it is to be remembered

**His Splendid Intrepidity.**

that within a few weeks, although he was even then approaching his eightieth year, Mr. Gladstone had not only recovered his spirits but his energies, and was once more attempting the herculean task of carrying the Home Rule Bill to the top of the hill. As one looks back now upon the character of the greatest Parliamentarian the House of Commons has ever known, the features which seem to stand out in the strongest relief are his undying enthusiasm, his indomitable courage in conflict, whether the tide was with him or against him, his intensely religious spirit, and that all-pervading faith in and love of his fellow-creatures which, more perhaps than any other quality, made him the master of so many hearts and the victor in so many fights.

WEMYSS REID.

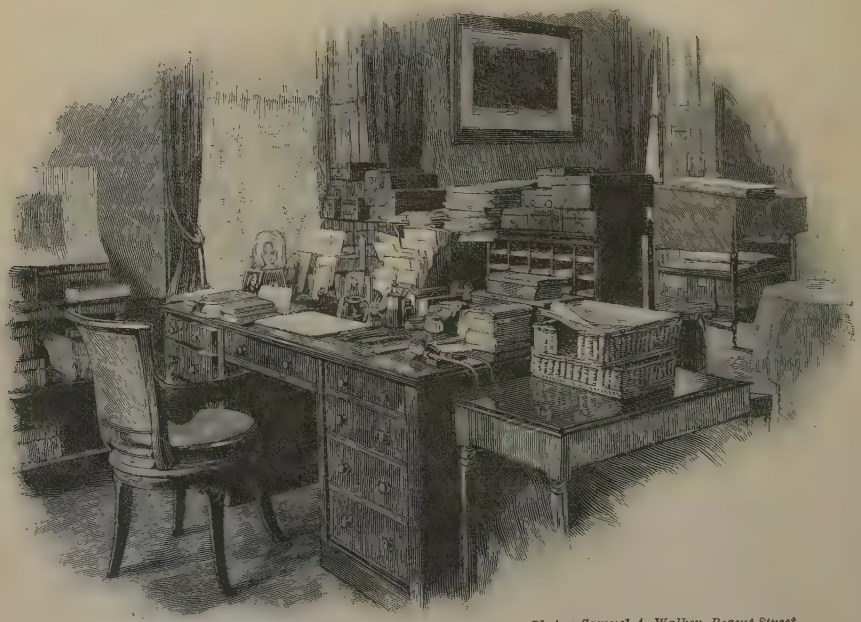


*Photo : Samuel A. Walker, Regent Street.*

THE EMPTY CHAIR AT DOWNING STREET.

*(Photographed immediately after Mr. Gladstone's last resignation.)*

LEITH, FROM CALTON HILL.

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# CHAPTER I.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S ANCESTRY AND EARLY YEARS.

The Gladstone Stock—Mr. Gladstone's Grandfather—His Father (Sir John Gladstone)—Father and Son—Descent on the Mother's Side—Birth at Liverpool—William Ewart—Mr. Gladstone's Mother—A Playmate's Recollections—A Domestic Chancellor of the Exchequer—Sir John Gladstone as a Publicist—Canning's Candidature for Liverpool—Sir John Gladstone elected to the House of Commons—W. E. Gladstone and Hannah More—His First Teacher—At Eton—Canning and Brougham—The Curriculum at Eton—Fagging—Dr. Keate—Early Eton Friends: the Selwyns, A. H. Hallam, and Others—A Flogging—Apocryphal Stories—Canning's Influence—Gladstone and the *Eton Miscellany*—Poetical Contributions—Mocking Poems—Prose and Oratory—Convincing an Opponent—An Early Peroration—Drinking Habits at Eton—Influence of Eton—Latin and Greek Acquirements—Canningite, not Eldonian—Attitude on the Slavery Question—Hereditary Qualities—At Christ Church, Oxford—The Oxford System—The University Lectures—Authority and Liberty—The Inculcation of Religion—Hallam, Tennyson, and Thackeray—Debate on Shelley and Byron—"The Apostles"—"The Weg"—Evangelical Influences—A Lost Scholarship—University Distinctions—Opposing the Reform Bill—Leaving Oxford.

"THE natives of Scotland, and all those who have Scotch blood in their veins, are not apt to forget the country from which they sprang." In that sentence Mr. Gladstone once enunciated a truism having special reference to himself. "I am not slow to claim the name of Scotchman, and, even if I were, there is the fact staring me in the face that not a drop of blood runs in my veins except what is derived from a Scottish ancestry." Yet even that

**Scottish Ancestry.**

statement was rendered the more complete by the declaration: "I am a man of Scotch blood only—half Highland and half Lowland, near the Border." For a full six centuries, indeed, the name of Gladstone, in almost as large a variety of spellings as that of Shakespeare, is to be traced through Lowland history. Herbert de Gledestan, "del counte de Lanark," was one of the signatories to the "Ragman's Roll" which acknowledged the sovereignty over Scotland of Edward I.; and from that time for many a generation Glaidstanes and Gledestans, Gledestanes and Gladstaines fought in foray and joined in raid as was the Border use.

It is in connection with one of these excursions and alarms, undertaken when Elizabeth was upon the throne of England and Mary Queen of Scots was her prisoner, that the name of Gladstone first comes into literary history, and twice associated with a characteristic that its most illustrious bearer may fairly have been held to own. The old Border ballad, "The Raid of the Reidswire," tells how—

> "Then Tividale came to wi' speid:
> The sheriff brocht the Douglas doun,
> Wi' Cranstane, Gladstane, gude at neid,
> Baith Rule Water and Hawick toun. . . .
> The Laird's Wat did weel, indeed;
> His frien's stood stoutlie by himsell:
> Wi' little Gladstane, gude in neid,
> For Graden ken'd na gude be ill."

"Good in need" might have been taken as the motto of the Gladstone family throughout, for there exist the records of how one of its representatives helped, in time of feud, a Walter Scott of Buccleuch, with whom "the Wizard of the North" could claim connection both in blood and sympathy; while, with the fighting instinct that has marked the line, another joined the Covenanting forces against Charles I., and fell in the fray. The more settled conditions of later days necessitated the sending of this energy into other channels. Truculent expeditions made way for trading enterprises; and when the last of the Gladstone lairds had sold his estate, his son adopted the calling of a maltster, in which he so flourished that his son in turn, carrying on the business with increasing prosperity, became an elder of the Kirk, a burgess of Biggar, and even "keeper of the baron's girnal."

**Mr. Gladstone's Grandfather.**

But striking as had been the advance of John Gladstone of Biggar, it was his fourth son, Thomas, who made the stride which brought the family out of the ancestral shire of Lanark, and crossed Scotland to Leith, with which the name of Gladstone will henceforward ever be associated. This grandfather of the statesman was a corn and flour merchant: and as he was a man of prudence, filled with the determination to make his mark in trade, legends attributing to him even more than the business caution traditionally associated with Scotsmen have grown around his memory. It has been told with circumstantial detail that, in his more struggling days, when the keeper of no more than a little shop, Thomas Gladstone included among his wares a kind of scone known locally as "baps," and that, as these were not so large a halfpenny-worth as those of his competitors, he was apt to be saluted by children in the street with the

cry of "Sma' baps!" The tale, as originally related, was innocent enough to be true; but it developed by various re-tellings into the calumny that during certain bread riots in time of scarcity he made himself obnoxious to the populace by selling small loaves. This need be repeated only for the sake of the reply of his illustrious grandson to a lady who asked whether the story was true: "When a calumnious statement is made as to one dead nearly a hundred years back, should you not call for proof instead of asking me to meet it?" And, as proof in this case is found wanting, all that needs further to be said of Thomas Gladstone is that, first as corn and flour merchant, and next as shipowner, he flourished exceedingly, and died honoured in Leith.

**Mr. Gladstone's Father.**

As Thomas Gladstone had migrated in search of fortune from Lanarkshire to Leith, so his eldest son, John, passed from Leith to Liverpool. Before the change, he had been introduced into his father's business at so early an age as not to allow him to receive the advantages of such an education as his singularly powerful intellect deserved. Yet his commercial instincts were so highly trained from the outset as to leave no doubt that he would strikingly succeed if fair opening were vouchsafed. While still in his teens he made voyages to the Baltic on his father's behalf in connection with corn; and only a little later he visited the United States upon very large commissions from a leading London banker. But it was in 1786, when no more than twenty-two, that he first found full outlet for his trading genius by entering the firm of Corrie, Bradshaw, and Company, corn-dealers in Liverpool. Testimony of a striking nature exists as to the great capacity of that firm's chief, for in the troubled summer of 1793, when this country, under the Administration of the younger Pitt, had just entered upon the war with France which was to last a score of years, Corrie communicated some suggestions for the national benefit to Henry Dundas, afterwards the impeached Lord Melville. That politician (who was then in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Control, a position to which he had been elevated only a few weeks before) was so impressed with the letter as to forward it to Lord Grenville, the Foreign Secretary, with the remarks: "I know not if you ever accidentally met with the writer. He used to come to me often on the subject of the corn laws and the sugar trade. He is an ingenious man. What he suggests is certainly very desirable." And in this fashion John Gladstone was associated, through his partner, with the Ministry of Pitt in the burning questions of corn and sugar, as he was presently to be with the Ministry of Peel through his pamphlets, and even more through his youngest son.

A mercantile firm which had for its senior partner "an ingenious man," whose opinions were deemed worthy of consideration by two members of an aristocratic Cabinet, was more remarkable at the close of the eighteenth than it would be at the end of the nineteenth century; and the custom of dealing at first hand with Ministers of the Crown was one to which John Gladstone always adhered. From the very outset of his career, he proved his courageous aptitude for commerce. Only two years after entering the firm, he was tested by a severe trial, from which he emerged with a commercial reputation that never faded. Owing to the general failure of the European corn crops, he was

despatched by his partners to the United States to buy grain; but, by the time he reached his destination by the slow means of travel then available, he found scarcity there likewise. No purchase was possible; and, to add to his chagrin, he learned, by the next ship from Liverpool, that his firm were so confident in the success of his mission that twenty-four vessels had been chartered to bring back the grain. But his courage did not fail him, even in the moment of possible humiliation; and, to the confusion of the ever-ready prophets of evil, who had foretold disaster

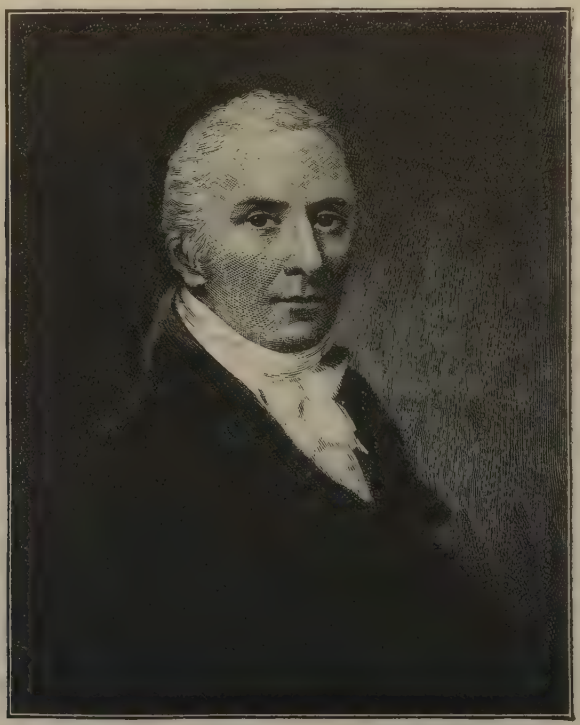


*Photo: Barraud, Liverpool.*

MR. GLADSTONE'S FATHER.

*(From a Painting.)*

for his partners and himself, he filled the two dozen ships with other American goods, and to such advantage that the net loss upon a transaction which had threatened ruin was only a few hundreds of pounds. The experience thus gained was of even more lasting value, for it enabled him to give the abler assistance to his partners when, as a consequence of the suggestions made by Corrie to Dundas, the firm received from the Pitt Administration, upon its determining to hold stores of grain at the greater ports, the appointment of Government agents at Liverpool.

John Gladstone, in fact, was as truly born to be a king of commerce as was his youngest son to be a leader of men; and the career of that son

cannot be fully comprehended unless it be realised that, brilliant as it was, it was not meteoric, but part of an ordered and derived system. The extraordinary business abilities of the father, which culminated in the accumulation of a large fortune, were the precursor of the financial genius which devised the most striking Budgets of modern times; but to the son was given that which to the father had been denied—a warm-blooded breadth of sentiment, an imaginative and illuminative faculty, which the elder

**Father and Son.**

*Photo: Barraud, Liverpool.*

MR. GLADSTONE'S MOTHER.

*(From a Painting.)*

would have regarded with suspicion, and perhaps even with scorn. This side of Mr. Gladstone's character may be held to have been as truly derived from his mother as that was from his father: with the subtle reasoning and cautious courage of the Southern Scot were joined in him the explosive energy and picturesque eloquence of the Highland Gael. For in the closing year of the eighteenth century, John Gladstone, having lost his first wife, without issue, married Ann, daughter of Andrew Robertson, of Dingwall; and thus their youngest son's claim — "I am a man of Scotch blood only, half Highland and half Lowland"—is justified.

"I know not why commerce in England should not have its old families rejoicing to be connected with commerce from generation to generation," Mr. Gladstone once declared in the city of his birth. "I think it a subject of sorrow, and almost of scandal, when those families who have either acquired or recovered station and wealth through commerce, turn their backs upon it, and seem to be ashamed of it." It was probably present to the then Prime Minister's mind as he spoke that the families of both his parents had "recovered station and wealth through commerce." But if the Gladstones could be traced back through laird after laird, even to Herbert of the "Ragman's Roll," and could claim Scandinavian connection and, perhaps, descent, the Robertsons could aver that they were of the Clan Donnachaidh, children of Duncan, King of Scotland. Their own branch was in direct line from the last Celtic Earl of Atholl, and was thus akin to such great Highland families as the Munros of Foulis and the Mackenzies of Coul and of Seaforth. Not alone were Celtic princes—the Lords of Kintail and of Eilean Donan—among their ancestors, but Henry III. of England and Robert the Bruce and James I. of Scotland. And even those who, rejecting the doctrine of heredity, see nothing in genealogy but a device of the Heralds' College, will admit that, while Englishmen may give an indifferent adhesion to the Tennysonian dictum—

Descent on the Mother's Side.

> "Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood,"

not a Scotsman worthy the name would scorn descent from Robert the Bruce.

Like the Gladstones, the Robertsons in the course of time had to leave lairdships behind, but it was to the law rather than to trade that mainly they turned. Both Ann Robertson's grandfather and father adopted the legal profession, and with such success that the one became Sheriff-Depute and Commissary of Ross, and the other Sheriff-Substitute of the same shire. From far Dingwall, where her father had thrice reigned as chief magistrate, Ann Gladstone went to make her home in busy, jostling, thriving Liverpool; but much of her heart remained in the Highlands, and her youngest-born was never in danger of forgetting the place whence she came. That child was the fourth son; and he who was destined to be four times Prime Minister was born at 62, Rodney Street, Liverpool, on December 29th, 1809—the birth-year also of Tennyson and Darwin. On the ensuing February 7th he was christened at the parish church of St. Peter as "William Ewart, son of John Gladstone, merchant, Rodney Street, and Ann (Robertson), his wife"; and these names were given after a close friend of the father, whose own son became the William Ewart of lasting fame as having secured in Parliament the passing of the Public Libraries Act.

William Ewart.

William Ewart and John Gladstone had for years been closely associated in religious and political life; and earlier in the century they were among the founders of the Oldham Street Presbyterian Church at Liverpool, the local Presbyterians having previously been accustomed to worship in the other Nonconformist chapels of the town. But no long time elapsed before John Gladstone quitted the communion of his

birth, and passed over to the Church of England, tradition attributing this to the influence of his wife, to whom a chosen minister was unacceptable, and who persuaded her husband to leave for a church more suited to her taste. The earliest fruit of the change was that John Gladstone built in Renshaw Street the first of the churches he was to erect, among others to follow being those of St. Thomas at Seaforth and St. Andrew at Liverpool, the advowson of which last continues in the hands of his descendants. Speculators upon "the might-have-beens" of history have indulged in surmises as to what might have been the effect upon the future Prime Minister's career if his theological training had been under Presbyterian instead of Episcopalian auspices. Such guesses have interest, but little value, for it was the home influence much more than any theological teaching that affected the character of the boy.

Mr. Gladstone's Mother.

Little has been written concerning Mr. Gladstone's mother, and little is known, for she lived in a day when the sacredness of home-life would have seemed to be violated if the wife had been much to the fore. But all the memories that remain testify not only to her accomplishments, but to her benevolence. Modest in her works, she well assisted more than one excellent institution at Liverpool, and she did not neglect to do the like at Dingwall. Seldom a summer passed without visits to her Highland home; and her name is perpetuated there in certain "Gladstone Buildings" that occupy the site of an almshouse for the very poor, the foundation of which she instigated as she long assisted generously to sustain it. Her youngest son, during his childhood, was always in her company on these visits; and even after he had for the fourth time become Prime Minister there was living at Dingwall one who, as "the little boy Graham," had often been invited by her to join him in play. That playmate's recollections would indicate that, even thus early, Mr. Gladstone exhibited one faculty that never forsook him.

A Playmate's Recollections.

"He was never content with a simple answer to a question," said Mr. Graham, "but probed everything to the very bottom before he appeared anything like satisfied." And this, in essence, is what Mr. Bright observed after long personal acquaintance with the statesman: "Gladstone goes coasting along, turning up every creek and exploring it to its source before he can proceed on his way."

"I remember," further observed the Dingwall companion of Mr. Gladstone's child-life, "we were one day standing together watching the operation of potato-planting, and we fell on discussing the proper distance that should be given between the plants. We argued the subject out to our own satisfaction, and when he had pumped all the information possible on the point from me, I was highly amused to see him take from his pocket a memorandum-book, in which he made a note of all the information he had gained on the subject. This notebook he called into requisition very often, jotting down scraps of information gained from day to day, and making memoranda of the most commonplace subjects." And there were other characteristics of the boy Gladstone which were worth recall. "He was always lively, always thirsting after instruction, and nothing pleased him more than reading. He would

go and buy a treatise or tract on some special subject and pore over it, mastering its contents."

To these recollections of Dingwall is to be added another, equally characteristic, which is that, even when a boy, Mr. Gladstone was entrusted by his mother, to some extent, with the household purse; and that at times she would laughingly say, "Go to the Chancellor of the

*Photo: Mr. A. B. Harris, Liverpool.*

THE HOUSE IN WHICH MR. GLADSTONE WAS BORN.

Exchequer, and tell him to give me some money." It has already been pointed out that such a jesting forecast of one of the great positions to come stood not alone. Even while at school the embryo statesman was semi-publicly addressed by his closest friend, Arthur Hallam, as "The Eton Premier," and he himself referred to certain of his school colleagues, in

**A Domestic Chancellor of the Exchequer.**

a work yet to be described, as "My Cabinet." From his very early days, in fact, he was regarded, both in his home circle and among his acquaintances, as destined for high place. No such story has been devised concerning John Gladstone and his youngest son as that which avers—and with absolute inaccuracy—that the first Sir Robert Peel, on his knees, and in the privacy of his counting-house, dedicated his earliest-born to the service of his country. But Mr. Gladstone's father saw in the boy great possibilities, and his whole training was of a nature to develope these to the full.

There can be no complete comprehension of Mr. Gladstone, indeed, unless his environment during his earliest and most impressionable years is studied and understood. The merely general idea that his father was a Liverpool merchant who, by strict attention to business, amassed a fortune and died a baronet, is singularly unjust to a striking and even imposing personality. His origin has already been traced, and his entrance into commercial life recorded; but it is necessary to sketch his career in relation to public affairs from that point in order that there may be realised the atmosphere that through childhood surrounded his son. It has been seen that the firm in which John Gladstone was a partner held the appointment of Government agents at Liverpool at the beginning of the great French war; and with various phases of that protracted struggle he was associated both as merchant and as politician. In the former capacity he had his losses as well as his gains because of the war: among the glimpses to be caught of him in Liverpool records before the eighteenth century closed, are those of his having a new ship, bound for Riga, captured by a French privateer, and of his presiding at "a very elegant entertainment" given by the local merchants and shipowners to the commander and officers of a king's ship appointed to convoy a number of valuable vessels to the Elbe and the Weser. In the year of Trafalgar, when occupying his first public position—that of chairman of the Liverpool Underwriters' Committee—John Gladstone was to the front in promoting a testimonial to the captain of a ship of that port, which had fought the French so well that, when compelled by superior force to strike her flag, the enemy's crew gave her three cheers, and their commander shared cabins with her captain and returned him his sword. And the spirit in which the war was waged must have specially appealed to business men, for the gallant captain, in thanking John Gladstone, exclaimed, "I have ever considered it my duty to defend the property of others, entrusted to my care, against the enemy, as long as there was any prospect of advantage to be gained by resistance."

**Sir John Gladstone as a Publicist.**

ARMS OF THE GLADSTONE FAMILY

John Gladstone, while anxious to recognise the courage of such defenders of our commerce, disapproved the policy of the war; and, though his Whig sympathies had never been very pronounced, it was upon that side that he took his first noteworthy political step. It is of the more importance to mark this because of its bearing upon his later connection with slavery, which had its influence on the career both of himself and of his son. At the General Election of 1807, precipitated by George III. to

punish the Whigs, John Gladstone came out openly in aid of William Roscoe, the sitting Whig member, though it was obvious that that candidate was certain of defeat. The "Ministry of All the Talents" had alienated the sympathy of a large portion of commercial Liverpool by its measure for the abolition of the slave-trade; and Roscoe, who, a score of years before, had been the first Liverpool man to raise his voice in the wilderness in denunciation of the "sum of all human villainies," was naturally its supporter. John Gladstone had not been engaged in "the African trade;" he had never touched the gold made in Guinea; and, though his fellow-merchants declared that ruin would fall upon the port because of the abolition of this iniquity, he threw in his lot with Roscoe. "Lang Johnny" and his "Scotch fiddle" became therefore a subject for Tory jest: "Sawney, out of Highland Fling, out of Snap, by Whiskey," was a lot at a burlesque auction, carefully labelled "J. G—ds—e," to prevent possibility of mistake. And it is to this period, when, prosperous himself, he was bringing his other brothers from Leith to share his prosperity, that may be attributed a legend flattering in its attempted disparagement. It runs that once when he had for his guest at a local theatre Henry Brougham, later to be a Whig candidate for the borough, and Macduff asked, "Stands Scotland where it did?" there came from the gallery the un-Shakespearian reply, "Na, na, sirs; there's pairt o' Scotland in England noo—there's John Gladstone and his clan."

The days of John Gladstone's activity as a supporter of the Whigs were soon to end, for before the General Election of 1812 he joined a number of moderate Tories in asking George Canning to come to Liverpool. The consequent contest was specially memorable, because it is the event of which John Gladstone's youngest son had earliest memory. For it was in the Gladstone home that the brilliant statesman resided during a poll which lasted eight days; it was from its windows that he nightly spoke; and Mr. Gladstone's first recollection was that, as a child not yet three years old, he was held by his nurse to look out upon the cheering crowds. A year later, when, upon the motion of his father, Liverpool illuminated in rejoicing at the crowning victory of the Allies over Bonaparte at Leipsic, and when the residences of the two friends, John Gladstone and William Ewart, were among the most resplendent of all, the former's transparencies called forth from a local Whig the epigram:

**Canning's Candidature for Liverpool.**

> "As a stranger expressed his exceeding amazement,
> To see C—N—G's face shining through G—D—NE's casement,
> 'Why wonder?' exclaimed a disciple of BROUGHAM,
> 'As to C—N—G, *'tis easy enough to see through him.*'"

But no spirit of prophecy had fallen upon the poet as to that other face which, at the Canning contest, had shone through the same casement. One of Canning's biographers has told how, when John Gladstone had moved from Rodney Street to a new home at Seaforth, a suburb of Liverpool, the room which the statesman occupied as his guest looked out upon the sea, and there he would sit for hours, gazing on the ocean, while the youngest Gladstone was playing on the strand below.

And, although it was of the eldest son, then growing into manhood, that Canning took marked notice, we can see him fondling the bright child of his earliest Liverpool visits, and can apply to the scene the lines of the poet upon the picture of Mr. Gladstone himself holding on his knee the infant Prince Edward of York:—

"By Lethe wave that hews away
Earth's murmur and the Elysian ease,
Here on this hither brink of day,
What spirits strangely met be these:
One from that silence parted new,
The other with his face thereto?

"O Chief, that hast ungirt the care,
O Child, that yet shalt wear thine own,
O Past and Future fronted there
All knowing and with all unknown,
Ye stand at helpless gaze the while,
In empty commune of a smile."

The political efforts of John Gladstone have been indicated; and the support he gave to Canning throughout that statesman's Parliamentary association with Liverpool, and afterwards to the great Free Trader, William Huskisson, need not here be detailed. But the connection of "Mr. Gladstone of Liverpool," as he was by this time known to the world of affairs, with the leading politicians of his day has to be made clear, for it was at this period that his son was growing in years. From the date that Canning joined the long-lived Administration of Lord Liverpool, John Gladstone was that Administration's firm adherent; and, although he protested against its revision of the Corn Laws, he stood by it in continuing the Income Tax, though this was a point upon which his fellow-citizens were seriously against him. It was in regard to this question that he was consulted by the Prime Minister of the day; and when, as a consequence, he was denounced by the leading Whig organ of London as a devoted and expectant friend of the Treasury, he characterised the insinuation as false and malignant, and declared: "I value my independence as much as any man can do; with the Government I have no connection: when I consider their measures calculated to promote the good of the country, I give them my humble support; when I think them otherwise, I do not hesitate to express my opinions." He could claim, moreover, that, in regard to the long French war just then ending, he had acted upon these principles. "When," he publicly averred, "the war commenced, I . . . doubted the necessity and questioned the expediency of the measure. I remained the firm friend of peace whilst I thought it was practicable for peace to be obtained with safety and with honour." It was only when these essential conditions could not be secured that he quitted the camp of his earliest political friends.

**John Gladstone as a Parliamentary Candidate.**

There was little, therefore, of the mere partisan about Mr. Gladstone's father; but, from whatever motive a man changes his side, it may be taken for granted that those whom he has left will attribute the worst. And, it was this that John Gladstone found when, at the Dissolution of 1818, he first sought to enter the House of Commons, choosing for

the contest the now disfranchised borough of Lancaster. His consequent absence from Liverpool did not save him from attack, one of the lampoons circulated on the occasion being a poetical epistle supposed to have been addressed to him by William Ewart, declaring that—

"When Willie Roscoe's tide was strong
And likely to succeed, John,
Baith you and I then join'd the throng,
Wi' mickle glee and speed, John.

*Photo: Barraud, Liverpool.*

W. E. GLADSTONE AND ONE OF HIS SISTERS.

(*From a Miniature.*)

"But Georgy Canning best of a'
Can weel our int'rest serve, John;
To cram our avaricious maw
He'll strain his well-tried nerve, John.

"In places and in pensions too,
He is a muckle man, John;
'Tis sure enough that I and you
May need the baith or ane, John."

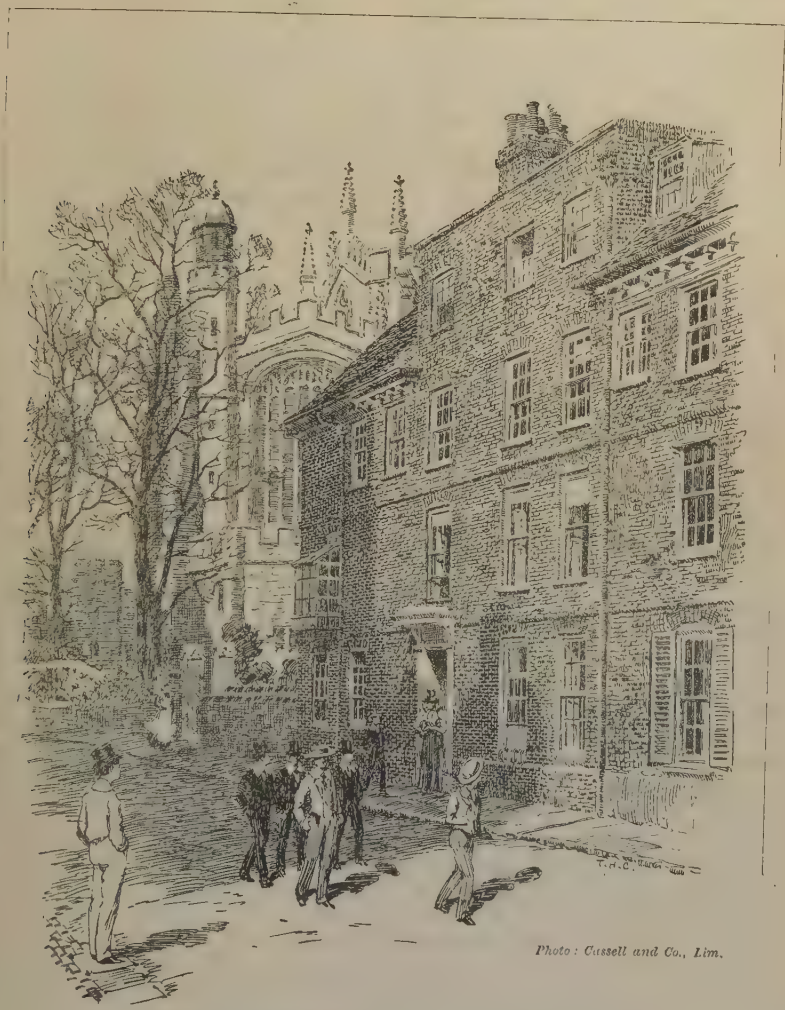
Another such squib, attributed to the same imaginary authorship, represented Ewart assigning the change in their joint opinions to similarly sordid considerations; but a third Whig lampoon was a shade more genial, for it related how—

"John Gladstone was as fine a man
As ever graced commercial story,
Till all at once he changed his plan,
And from a Whig became a Tory.

"And now he meets his friends with pride,
Yet tells them but a wretched story;
He says not *why* he changed his side:
He *was* a Whig—he's now a Tory."

But the laugh was on his side, for he was placed by a very large majority at the head of the Lancaster poll, and his political friends at Liverpool subscribed £6,000 for his election expenses.

By the time John Gladstone entered the House of Commons, his youngest son had reached the age to be systematically taught. His first




HOUSE WHERE MR. GLADSTONE BOARDED WHEN AT ETON.

association with the world outside the nursery had been a sight of the crowd which, in 1812, cheered Canning at his father's window; and the next was his being taken by his mother, when four years old, to visit Hannah More, a then living link with the times of Johnson and

Burke. The venerable lady gave him one of her little books, with the remark that he had just come into the world and she was just going out; but she survived to see the boy enter Parliament, and meanwhile to present to Edward Freeman, another child born to distinction, a volume of the *Eton Miscellany*, from which the future historian of the Norman Conquest learned the name of Gladstone. One of Mr. Gladstone's earliest recollections was of this same period, for, in the spring of 1814, on the occasion of his first visit to Edinburgh, he heard the hotel windows rattle to the Castle guns as they announced the victory of the Allies which sent Bonaparte to Elba; and he had memories of a Welsh servant who in the next year attributed the crowning mercy of Waterloo to the fact that the Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of that day had sent millions of men against the French. After his nursery training, he had some tuition from a clergyman named Jones, later an archdeacon; but his first real teacher was William Rawson, the incumbent of Seaforth, under whom subsequently came two boys who were to be known to public fame as Dean Stanley and Lord Cross. It is said that the future Chancellor of the Exchequer's grasp of figures was so slight that Rawson despaired of teaching him arithmetic; but he gave better promise of acquiring the classics, while his imaginative faculties were stimulated by the reading of his then favourite books—Scott's novels, the "Chronicles" of Froissart, the "Arabian Nights," and "The Pilgrim's Progress." And this love for the works of Scott did not pass with his boyish days. He followed the issue of each succeeding tale with eagerness and enthusiasm, a pleasant proof of this being afforded by a note of Hallam, who, in 1826, the year that "Woodstock" was published, communicated to a friend that he had had from William Gladstone "a long and very orderly epistle, full of . . . high-flying eulogiums on Walter Scott's 'Woodstock.'" And, while he was Prime Minister for the first time, he accepted his old friend Hope-Scott's dedication of an abridgment of Lockhart's best biography as "a loyal admirer of Scott, towards whom, both as writer and as man, I cannot help entertaining feelings, perhaps (though this is saying much) even bordering upon excess." Yet though in years after boyhood came a love for Shakspere and others of our greatest, it was from Homer, and Virgil, and Dante that Mr. Gladstone, alike as author and as orator, was accustomed to draw his most telling illustrations.

A Visit to Hannah More.

First Teacher.

A pleasant picture of his boyhood has been preserved for us. "From my father's windows at Seaforth," he related in the days of his age, "I used, as a small boy, to look southward along the shore to Liverpool, even then becoming a large town in the country. I remember well that it was crowned not so much by cloud as by a film of silver grey smoke, such as you may now see surmounting the fabrics of some town of ten or twenty thousand people, where the steam engine has as yet scarcely found a place. Four miles of the most beautiful sand that I ever knew offered to the aspirations of the youthful rider the most delightful method of finding access to Liverpool." But the time was soon to come when more serious work awaited him. John Gladstone, keenly realising, from his own lack of the privilege, the value of a public-school education, resolved upon providing this advantage for his sons. The third of them

—John Neilson—he had destined for the Navy, but the two eldest—Thomas and Robertson—he sent to Eton. It is said that he had some doubt as to whether the youngest should go to the same school, and that that son subsequently told his Eton head-master that his father had at first thought of sending him to the Charterhouse. If the idea had been realised—if it were ever entertained—it is interesting to know that at the

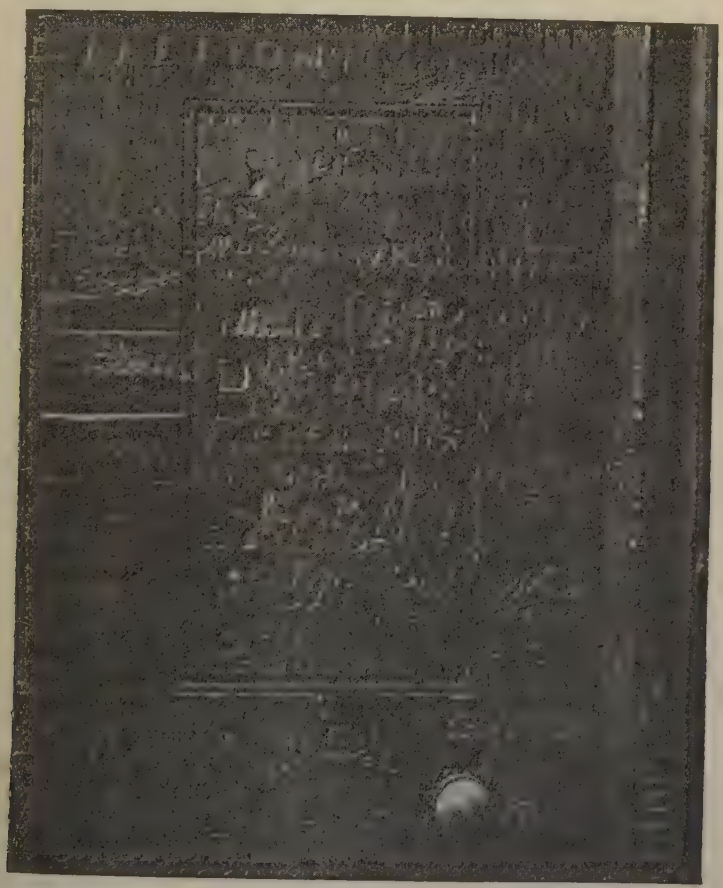


*Photo: Cassell and Co., Lim.*

MR. GLADSTONE'S NAME ENGRAVED ON THE DOOR NEAR DR. KEATE'S DESK AT ETON.

Charterhouse Mr. Gladstone would have been a fellow-pupil of Thackeray, and might have been linked with him in a project for a school magazine which the future novelist much favoured. But this again is a "might-have-been:" what occurred was that in September, 1821, William Gladstone followed in the footsteps of his two eldest brothers, and was admitted at Eton. And to the student of his career as a whole, there is no period better worth close

**At Eton.**

consideration than that which was spent at what he himself called "the Queen of all schools."

Mr. Gladstone's greatest rival in political life never had the good fortune to be at Eton; but from his pen has come the most glowing description of the school. For, when he had sent thither his favourite hero, Coningsby, he exclaimed: "There never was a youth who entered into that wonderful little world with more eager zest. Nor was it marvellous. That delicious plain, studded with every creation of graceful culture; hamlet and hall and grange; garden and grove, and park; that castle-palace, grey with glorious ages; those antique spires, hoar with faith and wisdom, the chapel and the college; that river winding through the shady meads; the sunny glade and the solemn avenue; the room in the Dame's house where we first order our own breakfast, and first feel we are free; the stirring multitude, the energetic groups, the individual mind that leads, conquers, controls; the emulation and the affection; the noble strife and the tender sentiment; the daring exploit and the dashing scrape; the passion that pervades our life, and breathes in everything, from the aspiring study to the inspiring sport: oh! what hereafter can spur the brain and touch the heart like this; can give us a world so deeply and variously interesting; a life so full of quick and bright excitement, passed in a scene so fair?" This is the Eton of which Mr. Swinburne in more recent times has sung—

> "Lords of state and of war, whom fate found strong in battle, in counsel strong,
> Here, ere fate had approved them great, abode their season, and thought not long."

It was the Eton of the days of the giants, when even its youngest or least ambitious pupil could scarcely fail to have been inspired. What generous-hearted boy could but have been touched by the spectacle presented at the Montem of 1823—the second of these annual festivals at Salt Hill which Mr. Gladstone attended—when Canning and Brougham met for the first time after a fierce contention in the Commons, which had nearly placed them in charge of the Serjeant-at-Arms, and when, to the spectators' delight, the Foreign Secretary stretched out a welcomed hand to his political foe? Could he have refrained from enthusiasm when, at the Eton regatta of the following year, Canning sat in the "ten-oar," the post of distinction allotted to the most illustrious visitor, and, becoming for the time a boy again, cheered with the loudest as the boats flew by? Would he have been otherwise than moved if, when he saw together at the Montem of 1826 the Duke of York, then heir-presumptive to the throne, and Wellington, Britain's foremost soldier—greeted with "great enthusiasm in the cutters"—the veil that hid the future could for a moment have been rent, and he could have known that a twelvemonth later the prince would have passed away, and that attendance at the funeral would cost Canning his life?

**The Curriculum.**

Thus far Eton on its poetical and romantic side: now for the practical. What was the curriculum at that period may be judged from a powerful, though obviously prejudiced, criticism published in 1830 in the *Edinburgh Review*. It could not, of course, be expected that the leading Whig magazine would treat with tolerance so essentially Tory an institution, especially in days

AN *AD MONTEM* PROCESSION.

(*From the Drawing by R. Pollard.*)

when party feeling raged with a bitterness scarcely realised in this milder age; but the account may be held to be in substance accurate:—

"At Eton, no instruction is given in any branch of mathematical, physical, metaphysical, or moral science, nor in the evidences of Christianity. The only subjects which it is professed to teach are the Greek and Latin languages; as much divinity as can be gained from construing the Greek Testament, and reading a portion of Tomline on the Thirty-nine Articles; and a little ancient and modern geography. In a common week there is one whole holiday, on which no school business is done, but every boy is required to go twice to chapel; one half holiday, on which there are two school-times and one chapel; and on Saturday there are three school-times and one chapel. On each of the three other days there are four school-times, three of which last respectively for three-quarters of an hour; the other has no fixed length, but probably averages for each boy about a quarter of an hour. The school-times would therefore amount to less than eleven hours in a week. The boys are, however, expected to come prepared into school; so that some time is occupied in previous study, and every boy hears the lesson construed at his tutor's house before he appears in school. A week's lessons in the fifth form would consist of about seventy lines of the Iliad, seventy lines of the Æneid, two or three pages of each of the compilations called the *Scriptores Græci* and *Romani*, thirty or forty lines from another compilation called the *Poetæ Græci*, and twenty or thirty verses of one of the Evangelists or the Acts of the Apostles. All the poetry which is construed is learnt by heart, besides which there is weekly repeated a lesson of the Eton Greek Grammar, and of a very excellent selection from the Elegiac poetry of Ovid and Tibullus. No other books than these are read by a boy in the fifth form; but he is required also to produce an exercise in Latin prose, generally on some trite moral subject, of at least twenty lines; twenty Latin verses, and some five or six stanzas of some Lyric measure. In weeks when a saint's day occurs, an English translation of a passage of Latin prose is likewise required."

The Scottish critic—for he wrote as one on the northern side the Tweed, who believed in "the far more pure and perfect universities of Scotland"—went on to hold that the quality of the instruction at Eton was as inferior as its quantity was small, and that the result was sterility. But if the mental discipline was bad, what of the moral and the physical? Here the mentor spoke out with vigour. "By a tacit agreement between the stronger and weaker parties has been established at Eton the system of fagging—the only regular institution of slave-labour enforced by brute violence which now exists in these islands. . . . A boy begins as a slave and ends as a despot. Corrupting at once and corrupted, the little tyrant riots in the exercise of boundless and unaccountable power; and while he looks back on his former servitude, is resolved that the sufferings which he inflicts shall not be less than those which he endured." The critic was willing to admit that the influence of this system of forced labour was sometimes mitigated by the friendship of equals, the kindness and sense of honour in some strong boys, and the intervention of holidays. But if the fagging was bad, the flogging was equally to be condemned, for it was meted out on the naked back by the head-master himself to every boy below the sixth form, whatever his age, for all offences except the most trivial, whether for insubordination in or out of school, for inability to construe a lesson or say it by heart, for being discovered out of bounds, for absence from chapel or school—for, in short, any breach of the regulations. And when the assailant had gone into elaborate detail to prove each head of his case, he indignantly demanded to know, "Is any parent who is anxious for the

**Fagging and Flogging.**

welfare of his children willing that his son should abandon all knowledge but that of the Greek and Latin languages? That when young and weak, he should be exposed to the unchecked tyranny of older boys; when grown stronger, that his evil passions should not only not be repressed, but heightened and inflamed by a regulation connived at, if not approved, by the governors of the school? That after a long and expensive residence, his son should be returned to his hands avowedly ignorant, so far as the school instruction is concerned, of modern

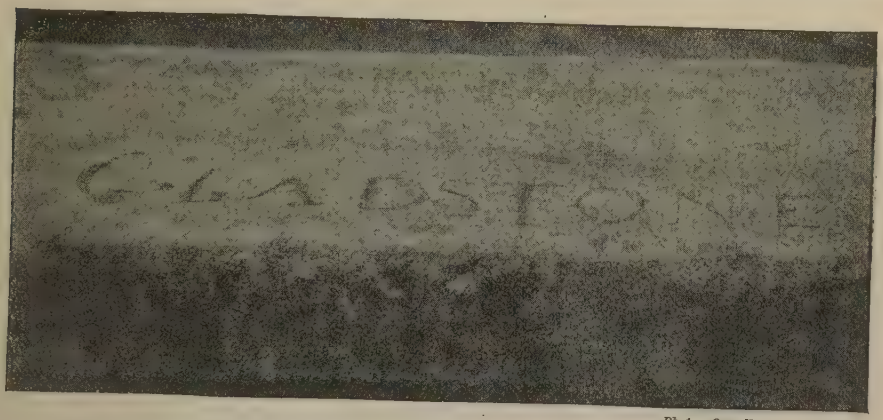



*Photo: Cassell and Co., Lim.*

SIGNATURE CUT BY MR. GLADSTONE ON THE LOW WALL IN FRONT OF ETON COLLEGE, NEAR THE HOUSE WHERE HE BOARDED.

languages, literature, and history—and probably not possessing sufficient knowledge even of the ancient languages to enable him to construe a page in any Latin or Greek author with ease and correctness?" Evidently the critic expected an affirmative answer, for he elsewhere despairingly asked, "What is the charm which allures so many scholars within its bounds? What are its recommendations in the eyes of so many parents and guardians?" And the replies, then as now, if truthfully given, would be that it is not so much learning that is expected from Eton as tone, so that the pupil may be "The glass of fashion and the mould of form."

The indictment was over-sweeping, less as to the learning to be obtained at the school than as to the moral influence exercised. In the matter of fagging, for instance, Mr. Gladstone's experience was not that which the *Edinburgh Review* would have expected. The boys in the Lower School had to fag for those in the Upper; and it was the fag's duty to brush clothes, prepare breakfast and tea, stop balls at cricket, go on errands, and generally fetch and carry, though it did not extend as far as cleaning shoes and waiting at dinner; the punishment for dereliction being administered with the fist, or sometimes even with a convenient cricket-bat. Room for tyranny obviously existed here, but Mr. Gladstone neither "began as a slave" nor "ended as a despot," for he was fag in the first year to his eldest brother; while the most effective comment upon his own conduct, when the time came for him to have fags, was the remark

of John Smith Mansfield, afterwards a metropolitan magistrate, "I trust I treated my own fag as well as Gladstone treated me." And of another of his fags, it is told that when Mr. Gladstone, as Prime Minister, once went to Windsor in company with a new Lord Justice, going to be sworn of the Council, he was interested on the Paddington platform by a pleasant reminder of the relation in which they had once stood.

DR. KEATE.
*(From the Etching by R. Dighton.)*

**Dr. Keate.**

At the time Mr. Gladstone entered Eton, John Keate, the last of a long line of "flogging head-masters," which had Busby of Westminster as its most illustrious exemplar, held the rod; and with graphic touch, approaching even caricature, Kinglake has painted his portrait. "He was little more (if more at all) than five feet in height, and was not very great in girth, but in this space was concentrated the pluck of ten battalions. He had a really noble voice, and this he could moderate with great skill, but he had also the power of quacking like an angry duck, and he almost always adopted this mode of communication in order to inspire respect. His red, shaggy eyebrows were so prominent that he habitually used them as arms and hands for the purpose of pointing out any object towards which he wished to direct attention; the rest of his features were equally striking in their way, and were all and all his own." But much of Keate's famous flogging propensity may be held to have sprung from the wretched discipline which he found prevailing at Eton, for when he was appointed the school had a very small staff of masters, and he himself had to control at least 170 boys in one room. It may be mentioned in extenuation of his copious use of the birch, that he had as head-master to mete out punishment for such indignities as the screwing up and smashing of his desk, the chorusing of songs in school-time, and the throwing of rotten eggs. Little wonder, therefore, may be felt that his one regret, as expressed to some old pupils, was that he had not flogged them more, especially as the rod was his panacea for all mental or moral ills. The story is

Photo: Hills and Saunders, Eton.

HEADMASTER'S ROOM, ETON, SHOWING THE BIRCHES AND FLOGGING-BLOCK.

told upon the authority of the late Bishop Harold Browne that someone complained to Keate that the theology and Christian teaching of Eton were not satisfactory. And the head-master, feeling the force of this criticism, thus addressed the school:—"Boys, you should always be pure in heart: whatever difficulties surround you, whatever temptations assail you, you must always be pure in heart; and, if you are not, I will flog you."

Before, however, the youngest Gladstone had personal and painful experience of this characteristic of the formidable head-master, he had been first under the tutorship, in the Lower School, of an eccentric clergyman named Knapp, and afterwards of the excellent Dr. Hawtrey. His earliest friends at Eton were the four brothers Selwyn, who boarded in the same house, and who all, like himself, possessed brilliant ability. George, the second of these, who became Bishop of New Zealand, and later of Lichfield, was Gladstone's special "chum"; and it is told how, coming home from Eton one Eastertide, the future prelate wished to invite the future Premier to stay with him. His mother replied that it was impossible, for the spring cleaning was going on, and guests would be in the way; whereupon the lad, in his determination to secure his friend's company, rushed upstairs, and soon reappeared with a mattress, and the triumphant exclamation, "There now, where's the difficulty?" But there came to Eton a twelvemonth after himself the youth who was to be Mr. Gladstone's dearest friend. Arthur Hallam, who was more than a year his junior, had shown from childhood the promise of talents far above the average; and, before being under the tuition of Hawtrey, had mastered both French and Latin. Hawtrey, who always ascribed the best part of his own intellectual training to his rivalry with great competitors at Eton, was quick to perceive the material upon which he had to work; and much of Hallam's wide culture was due to that tutor's encouragement. It was not the same with Mr. Gladstone, who was under him for only one half in the year that Hallam came. He was then in the Upper Remove of the Fourth Form, and Hawtrey "sent him up for good." "It was an event in my life," Mr. Gladstone afterwards wrote, "and he and it together then, for the first time, inspired me with a desire to learn and to do which was never wholly lost, though there was much fluctuation before it hardened into principle and rule at a later period of my life."

**Early Eton Friends.**

But it was not until Mr. Gladstone had been at Eton for two or three years that he became very intimate with Hallam; and meantime he was making many acquaintances and some friends. In 1823, when he entered the Upper School, there were among his companions Stephen Glynne, who was to be his brother-in-law; George Cornewall Lewis, who in after years was his Cabinet colleague; Walter Kerr Hamilton, subsequently Bishop of Salisbury, who declared that, although he was a thoroughly idle boy at the school, he was saved from some worse things by getting to know William Gladstone; and his special friend, George Augustus Selwyn, to whom he himself attributed no small share of the movement in the direction of religious earnestness which marked the Eton of the succeeding decade; and to this list is to be added Francis Hastings Doyle, then in the Lower School, who was later Mr. Gladstone's groomsman. Among other schoolfellows marked out for fame were to be found, in

subsequent years, James Milnes Gaskell, a politician who never quite fulfilled his early promise; Charles Kean, whose great powers as an actor were recognised by a public testimonial, presented by Mr. Gladstone while Chancellor of the Exchequer in the second Palmerston Administration; and Edward Creasy, of "Fifteen Decisive Battles" fame. And with these are to be numbered James Hope-Scott, the eminent Parliamentary lawyer, and Lord Lincoln, afterwards Duke of Newcastle, who were both to become associated with some eventful developments in Mr. Gladstone's career.

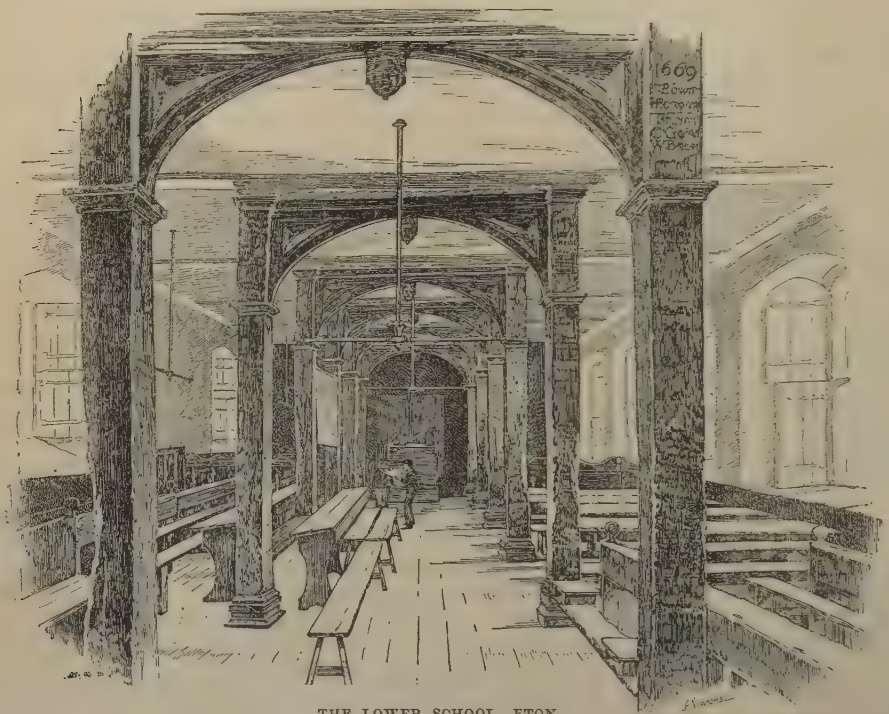
During the earlier years of the six Mr. Gladstone was at Eton he spent a very happy time, chequered only by the customary troubles that beset the young student in the flogging period; and around these troubles the genius of legend has been allowed full play. Mr. Gladstone himself has assisted to dispel some of the myths that have attached themselves to his school career. The historian of Eton narrated, in the earliest edition of his work, that a proof that Keate "could restrain himself, even when armed with the birch, is shown by his forbearance towards an eminent living statesman who, when acting as præpostor, got into trouble for omitting from the bill the name of a friend who had missed a lesson. Before commanding the præpostor to kneel down, Keate charged him with a breach of trust. The boy, showing even then a promptitude in debate and a power of detecting microscopic differences which have since become famous, defended himself by saying: 'I beg your pardon, sir; it would have been a breach of trust if I had undertaken the office of præpostor by my own wish; but it was forced upon me.' Keate yielded, and let him off." Another version of the reply gives it: "If you please, sir, my præpostorship would have been an office of trust if I had sought it of my own accord, but it was forced upon me"; and this story agrees with the other that the answer prevented punishment. But Mr. Gladstone disclaimed all memory of pleading such an excuse, and averred that he was certainly flogged, his version of the tale being that, from kindness and good nature, not unmixed with pity, he omitted, as præpostor, to put down the names of three boys in the list sent up to Keate of culprits to be flogged. The master of his Remove discovered the omission, gave the command, "Gladstone, put down your own name in the list to be flogged to-morrow," and the inevitable result was that Keate, as the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge euphemistically phrased it, "added the last touches to the person and character of Mr. Gladstone." And that for this the future statesman bore the pedant no ill-will is attested by the compliment he paid in print to Keate in the closing month of his schoolhood, as "one whose rebukes we have often merited, but whose approbation it will be our pride and our pleasure to receive."

A Flogging.

Even when telling authenticated stories of Mr. Gladstone's Eton life, it is necessary to add certain that are apocryphal, as a warning what not to believe, for some are so well invented that they have long been accepted as true. One of the most interesting of these dealt in detail with the visit of Canning to his old school on the 4th of June, 1824. The Foreign Secretary of the day no longer sat for Liverpool, but the story was based upon the presumption that he had far from forgotten the son of his leading

Apocryphal Stories.

political friend in that borough. Canning, so ran the tale, went to the youth's room, walked with him about the college, and afforded him sound advice. "Give plenty of time to your verses; every good copy you do will set in your memory some poetical thought or well-turned form of speech which you will find useful when you speak in public." There



THE LOWER SCHOOL, ETON.

*Photo: Hills and Saunders, Eton.*

was the utterance of the trained orator; and, if the narrator had stopped at that point, the anecdote might have been believed. But, with a splendour of detailed invention that almost reached the sublime, he went on to aver that Mr. Gladstone could recall in later days that, when Canning touched upon politics, he spoke "almost like one who had need of advice himself, so full was he (or seemed to be) of those illusions official life too often dispels."

"Illusions" would appear to be indeed the fitting word in all this connection. More than two years were to elapse before Canning should utter in the House of Commons his proudest boast: "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old"; but at this time the air was full of the fight of Spanish South America for independence and of Greece for freedom. And the statesman whose most lasting honour was his ever-readiness to aid all peoples rightly struggling to be free was made to talk to the fourteen-year-old schoolboy thus: "Imagine a

Peruvian Parliament; fancy a new Areopagus at Athens, Greeks in tail-coats and beaver hats, Epaminondas M.P. for Thebes, Alcibiades M.P. for Athens, Lycurgus and Draco both sitting for Sparta and being law-officers of the Crown—Draco, of course, expecting his speedy promotion to a Lord Chief Justiceship." This sounds like an anticipation of some of the weaker phrases of Carlyle; and now comes a touch of the practical politician: "It all seems so strange, and yet it's all coming; and what a novel thing it will be for English Ministers to find themselves in communication with nations, veritably with nations, and not with excited or trembling kings, speaking through arrogant soldiers or tricky courtiers." But the most effective comment upon the story is that Mr. Gladstone, when privately questioned on the subject, stated that Canning never at any time took marked notice of himself, but only of his eldest brother, who, it is to be added, had left Eton over a year before the date of this alleged conversation.

Not in direct but in indirect fashion was Canning to influence a

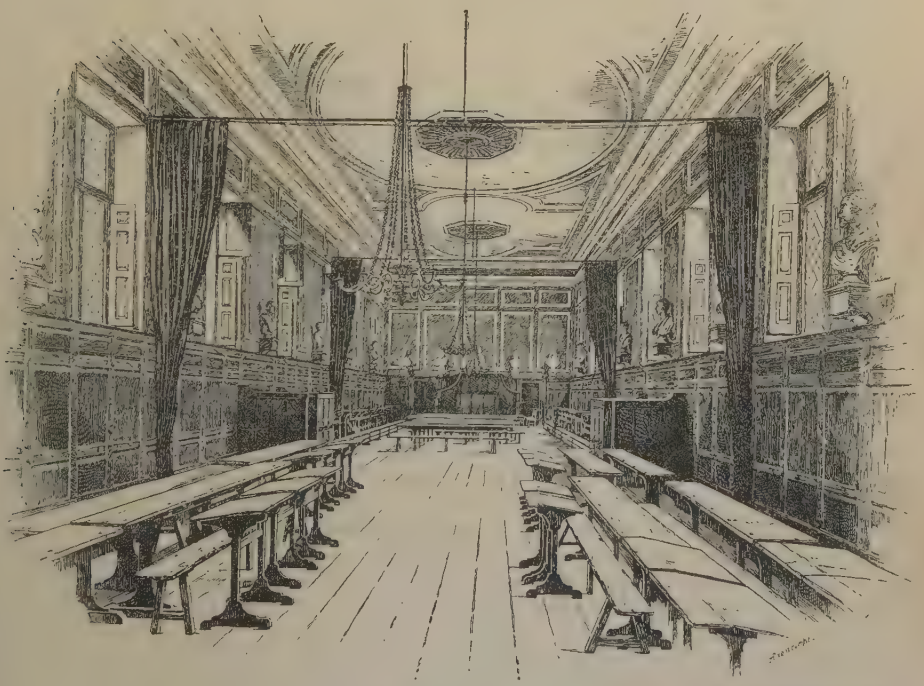


*Photo: Hills and Saunders, Eton.*

THE UPPER SCHOOL, ETON.

pregnant portion of Mr. Gladstone's school career. The foremost statesman of his day was an Etonian to the core, and so attached to his boyhood's delight that he scarcely ever failed attendance at the annual Montem. His own enjoyment at such times, it was observed by those who knew him well, was to the full as real as that of the boys, and he

entered with such unflagging zest into the hilarity of the scene that the politician was forgotten in the Etonian. But there was one special reputation he had acquired while in the school, and that has to be recalled in relation to Mr. Gladstone's connection with the *Eton Miscellany*, one of the three Eton magazines which have had conductors and contributors that render them immortal. For it was Canning who was a principal contributor to the *Microcosm*, the earliest and most brilliant of the three, in the opening number of which it was observed, with unconsciously prophetic eye, that among those then at Eton "we may see the embryo statesman, who hereafter may wield and direct at pleasure the mighty and complex system of European politics, now employing the whole extent of his abilities to circumvent his companions at their plays, or adjusting the important differences which may arise between the contending heroes of his little circle." With the departure of Canning from Eton the *Microcosm* disappeared; but, some thirty years later, Hawtrey encouraged his brilliant pupil Mackworth Praed to start first a manuscript magazine, the *Apis Matina*, of which the young poet wrote about half, and afterwards the printed *Etonian*. It has been said that Mr. Gladstone was inspired to emulate this effort by having breakfasted in his eldest brother's rooms with Praed and his co-contributors; but as Praed left Eton at nineteen, before the arrival of William Gladstone, not yet twelve, this suggestion of the origin of the *Eton Miscellany* lacks likelihood. What is obvious is that a clever youth, filled with admiration for Canning, and hearing from the outer world the echoes of Praed's rising fame, did not need the incentive of personal encounter to endeavour, in the last year of his stay at the school, to carry on the succession of the *Microcosm* and the *Etonian*.

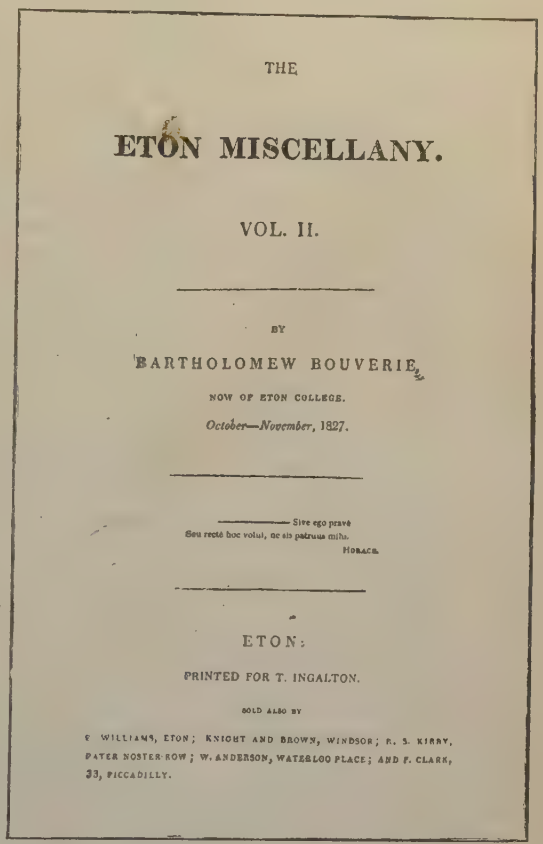
**Canning's Influence.**

That succession was, indeed, deliberately marked, for when in 1827, on the 4th of June—always a day of special moment to the school—the *Eton Miscellany* was launched, its editor was announced to be "Bartholomew Bouverie," Mr. Gladstone having chosen that pen-name as editor, just as Canning in similar case had taken that of "Gregory Griffin," and Praed of "Peregrine Courtenay." And how strongly the Praed tradition remained was emphasised by "Bartholomew Bouverie's" account, in the second number, of how he had been "considering what my defunct predecessor, Peregrine Courtenay and his merry colleagues, would think of my presumption in setting up another periodical while their own laurels were yet green." Later came the ejaculation: "Looking back, as I do, with veneration on my great predecessor, Peregrine Courtenay, whose throne I fill, however unworthily, and whose sceptre I wield, however weakly." And it was a volume of the *Etonian* that, just after leaving, he lent, as fitting reading, to Arthur Stanley, the future Dean of Westminster, who was then going to Rugby.

**Mr. Gladstone as Editor.**

With Mr. Gladstone, at the outset, George Selwyn was associated as co-editor; and the two friends so completely shared the work of the opening number that each wrote a portion of the inaugural address, "To the Many-Headed Monster! An Epistle Dedicatory, Explanatory, and Conciliatory." This division of labour, indeed, had a curious consequence, for, in later days, when, as a great party leader, Mr. Gladstone was

naturally the subject of heated political attack, it was charged upon him that even in the days of his pupilage he had declared: "There is one gulph in which I fear to sink; and that gulph is Lethe. There is one stream which I dread my inability to stem—it is the tide of Popular Opinion." Here was conceit: yet, here was cowardice: and both were mingled in a succeeding sentence: "Still, there is something within me that bids me hope that I may be able to glide prosperously down the stream of public estimation." Those who thus harshly judged were not aware that these were the words, not of William Gladstone, but of George Selwyn, and that the former, taking the matter in a lighter mood, had commenced his portion of the joint article with the exclamation: "With hopes like these, however founded, I, being minded to secure for myself eternal fame, do hereby declare to the world my determination to take up the trade of authorship." In this vein he went on until near the conclusion, when, with a genuine touch of feeling, he said, "Fame we cannot, we dare not, aspire to; indulgence we may presume upon; and we commit our humble offering to the world with the hope and the confidence that those will be found, both among our fellows and among the public at large, who will be so just as to praise the merits which may, and so lenient as to pardon the faults which must, be found in the *Eton Miscellany*."



THE

ETON MISCELLANY.

VOL. II.

BY

BARTHOLOMEW BOUVERIE,

NOW OF ETON COLLEGE.

*October—November*, 1827.

——— Sive ego prave
Seu recte hoc volui, ne sis patruus mihi.
HORACE.

ETON:

PRINTED FOR T. INGALTON.

SOLD ALSO BY

C. WILLIAMS, ETON; KNIGHT AND BROWN, WINDSOR; R. S. KIRBY, PATER NOSTER-ROW; W. ANDERSON, WATERLOO PLACE; AND F. CLARK, 33, PICCADILLY.

TITLE-PAGE (REDUCED) OF THE *ETON MISCELLANY*.

Although Selwyn started as co-editor, he soon left Eton for Cambridge, and Doyle and Frederic Rogers (afterwards Lord Blachford) associated themselves with Mr. Gladstone as a committee of management; but, as Rogers has testified, "Gladstone became at once the backbone, editor, and responsible for filling up the pages." A striking picture of the ardent young editor, as ready upon emergency to furnish a complete number of the *Eton Miscellany* as was Brougham to contribute a whole *Edinburgh Review*, has been drawn by Doyle. For in "The Poetaster's Plea," addressed

to Mr. Gladstone himself when a rising young Parliamentarian, he is described as—

> "One who in his editorial den
> Clenched grimly an eradicating pen,
> Confronting frantic poets with calm eye,
> And dooming hardened metaphors to die.
> Who, if he found his young adherents fail,
> The ode unfinished, uncommenced the tale,
> With the next number bawling to be fed,
> And its false feeders latitant or fled,
> Sat down unflinchingly to write it all,
> And kept the staggering project from a fall."

There would seem to have been little of poetic licence in this last statement, for Doyle long afterwards narrated how, especially in regard to the second volume, the editor "supported the whole burden upon his own shoulders. I was unpunctual and unmethodical, so also were his other vassals, and the *Miscellany* would have fallen to the ground but for Mr. Gladstone's untiring energy, pertinacity, and tact." And he added the interesting criticism: "My father, a man of great experience in life, predicted Mr. Gladstone's future eminence, from the manner in which he handled this somewhat tiresome business." That was not the whole of the elder Doyle's prophecy, for he said to his son at the time: "It is not that I think Gladstone's papers better than yours or Hallam's, but the force of character he has shown in managing his subordinates, and the combination of ability and power that he has made evident, convince me that such a young man cannot fail to distinguish himself hereafter."

The Gladstone contributions were in both prose and verse, and various among them are worth study as being the earliest attempts of a master of expression to find the most fitting vehicle of self-manifestation; but it may at once be said that he did not discover it in the written word, for it was in the spoken word that his supreme power lay. "I think it but fair to inform the public, though it is probable enough they have discovered it already without my assistance, that I am no poet." Thus wrote the young editor, and his modesty was justified. In his earliest epilogue—addressed, of course, "Most courteous Public!"—he soared no nearer poesy than—

As a Poet.

> "Humble my wish, confined its scope,
> Yet fear is mingled with my hope;
> I know not what of ire or hate
> Is written in the book of Fate;
> I know not what is doom'd to me
> In hidden Destiny's decree. . . .
> Will Fame assign to me a place
> Beside the fathers of my race. . . .
> Or doom my melancholy ghost
> To join the dark Tartarean host,
> With many a luckless author more
> To wander on the Stygian shore,
> While housemaids tear my sacred strains,
> To light their fires and scrub their stains?"

ETON COLLEGE, FROM THE PLAYING FIELDS.

*Photo: Hills and Saunders, Eton.*

His second epilogue passed from the vein of burlesque to that of bathos, for therein a "God of Day," a Zephyr, "Mercy's wand," "Judgment's rod," and "soft Elysium," jostled one another in the old, frigid fashion. It is little wonder that so shrewd a youth as the author, when he saw such lines in cold print, became sufficiently possessed with the editorial spirit as himself to write in the following number—

> "Some of thy verse is good, I own,
> And some of it is fairish;
> Some scarce can vie with burial stone,
> And sexton of the parish.'

This capacity for perceiving his own defects as a verse-wright saved the young aspirant from taking his efforts at poetry too seriously. Even when he inserted a translation by himself from the "Hecuba" of Euripides, he appended the remark: "You cannot be so unreasonable as to expect it should bear much resemblance to the original"; while to another subsequently given was added the note: "It is particularly requested of my readers that, on the perusal of this translation, they do not refer to the original; it will dispel the illusion, as the critics say." But when he was in the vein, Mr. Gladstone could write verse with success, as he did in what Rogers always considered his most effective production, that being a humorous poem upon John (afterwards Lord) Hanmer—known among the friends as "David ap Rice"—who, after three very solemn contributions in verse, had deserted the magazine after the second number. And this effort is the more worth recalling because it bantered the Principality in a fashion not easily to be imagined in connection with the author of the phrase "Gallant little Wales!" For, in a dream—

> "Thalia brought the laurel, and Melpomene the bays,
> And 'Sacred be to us,' they cried, 'O David Rice, your lays:
> For we are Welch; in Wales, too, our Pegasus was bred;
> And Jove is Welch, and Neptune Welch; and he that rules the dead;
> And when old Chaos was, where now are fields and hills and dales,
> They'd sun, and moon, and pedigrees, and toasted cheese in Wales!'"

More regard was paid to English sentiment, for a patriotic ballad, having Richard Cœur de Lion for its theme, soon followed, with the opening declaration—

> "Bright beam'd the sun on England's smiling land,
> Calm flow'd the waves to kiss the silent strand;
> St. George's banner floated high in air,
> And many a gallant band was marshall'd there,
> And England's monarch England's children led
> The pathless waste of eastern shores to tread."

The "glories of the British oak" were incidentally referred to, but the remainder of a long poem was of the turgid order to be gathered from the concluding moral—

> "Deem not, proud man, that human tongue can tell
> What doom is his, of heaven or of hell:

Ye know the path, the earthly path he trod,
Yet vengeance, judgment, mercy, are of God.
In silent wonder gaze, nor further dare;
Pray to be spar'd thyself—thy fellows spare."

But, in the interval of three months, necessitated by the school vacation, between the publication of this poem and the issue of the *Eton Miscellany's* next number, occurred the death of Mr. Gladstone's political idol; and the fruit was a poem[1] in which true feeling was touched. His very first poetic effort had been in praise of Canning, for, when only fifteen, he had written of that statesman—

"The helm of England needs his guiding hand,
A nation's wonder, and a nation's joy.
He is the pilot that our God hath sent
To guide the vessel that was tost and rent!
Exalt thine head, Etona, and rejoice,
Glad in a nation's loud acclaiming voice;
And 'mid the tumult and the clamour wild,
Exult in Canning—say, he was thy child."

There is an echo here of the designation—"The Pilot who weathered the Storm"—applied to the younger Pitt by his admirers, of whom Canning was far from the least ardent; and the association in the writer's mind between the two great names, as well as the time-honoured metaphor, was further emphasised in the "Reflections in Westminster Abbey, October, 1827," which, after his own hero's death, he gave to his immediate world in the *Eton Miscellany*:—

"Stranger, approach! approach and lightly tread
Above the ashes of the mighty dead.
. . . Believe, beside,
That Pitt was mortal, and that Canning died! . . .
The tongue is silent, and the lip is cold—
Yon pallid hand no more the helm may hold.
The soul, that rov'd unwearied, unconfin'd,
May Death's cold grasp, and icy fetters bind?
O, Britain, weeping o'er his ashes, prove
How true thy faith, how fond thy ceaseless love."

It would be as unfair as unreasonable to institute a comparison between these schoolboy "Reflections" upon a great statesman and the noble lines in which Scott, a score of years before, had mourned at the tomb of Pitt and paid fit tribute even to Fox; but that those lines were familiar to Mr. Gladstone may be assumed from the splendid use he made of certain of them when himself bewailing in the House of Commons the untimely death of Peel:—

"Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!"

Such other Gladstone poems as are sombre scarcely deserve recall, for they are formal, and lack true emotion. As has been observed of Canning's

contributions to the *Microcosm*, Mr. Gladstone's poetical genius lay in the mocking and not in the heroic vein; and one which is of the nature of burlesque merits quotation, if only because this "Ode to the Shade of Wat Tyler" was in Mr. Gladstone's more mature years considered a grievous indication of a subtle leaning towards revolution even in his young and Tory days:—

"Shade of him, whose valiant tongue
On high the song of freedom sung;
Shade of him, whose mighty soul
Would pay no taxes on his poll;
Though, swift as lightning, civic sword
Descended on thy fated head,
The blood of England's boldest pour'd,
And number'd Tyler with the dead!

"Still may thy spirit flap its wings,
At midnight, o'er the couch of kings:
And peer and prelate tremble, too,
In dread of nightly interview!
With patriot gesture of command,
With eyes, that like thy forges gleam,
Lest Tyler's voice and Tyler's hand
Be heard and seen in nightly dream.
. . . . . .

"Shades, that soft Sedition woo,
Around the haunts of Peterloo!
That hover o'er the meeting halls,
Where many a voice Stentorian bawls!
Still flit the sacred choir around,
With 'Freedom' let the garrets ring,
And vengeance soon in thunder sound
On church, and constable, and king.
. . . . . .

"Still 'mid the cotton and the flax
Warm let the glow of Freedom wax:
Still 'mid the shuttles and the steam,
Bright let the flame of Freedom gleam!
So men of taxes, men of law,
In alley dun, and murky lane,
Shall find a Tyler or a Straw
To cleave the despot's slaves in twain!

Peterloo, once a name of terror to those having authority, is now almost as dim a political memory as are Thistlewood and Ings, hanged for participation in the Cato Street Conspiracy, and likewise invoked by the burlesque Muse, who

"Sings of all who, soon or late,
Have burst subjection's iron chain,
Have seal'd the bloody despot's fate,
Or cleft a peer or priest in twain."

But there was more life in the editor's verse than in his prose, for in this latter the pen was apt to run heavily; and even his eulogium upon Canning, after the statesman's death, failed to be suffused with the emotion the author undoubtedly felt, and would assuredly have displayed had the instrument

**Prose Style.**

Photo: Hills and Saunders, Eton.

THE PRESENT DEBATING ROOM OF THE ETON SOCIETY.

been the tongue instead of the pen. His true medium, indeed, was that of oratory, and scope was found for his powers in the meetings of the Eton Society. This body, which continues to exist, was founded in 1811 by Charles Fox Townshend, a promising youth, who died at the age of twenty-two, while a candidate for the Parliamentary representation of Cambridge University. Its members were originally known as the *Literati;* but the Society was subsequently nicknamed "Pop," from the word *popina*, signifying an eating-house, because its meetings were held over a confectioner's shop. For many years it had a chequered career; and when in the October of 1825, Mr. Gladstone was admitted, its ability much longer to sustain life was uncertain. His speeches were many, and the full notes of them which are still preserved in the Society's "Journals" are elaborate, and filled with quotations. The 29th of the month named is marked as the date of his maiden address—an effort which the keeper of the Society's records described as eloquent upon the question, "Is the Education of the Poor on the whole Beneficial?" to which he gave an affirmative reply. He rapidly won school fame as an orator; and the remembrance of his efforts not only caused Doyle, years before Lytton termed Lord Derby "the Rupert of debate," to call Mr. Gladstone in his Eton days "the monarch of debate," but justified some admiring Conservatives, when putting him forward as a candidate for Manchester in 1837, in describing him as having been "a most distinguished debater at Eton."

Oratory.

Doyle's reference deserves expansion, for, in a poem already quoted from, as showing Mr. Gladstone in the editorial chair, he is further pictured as—

> "President Minos of our little state,
> Who, when we met to give the world the law
> About Confucius, Cæsar, or Jack Straw,
> Saw with grave face the unremitting flow
> Of puffs and jellies from the shop below;
> At the right moment, called us to forsake
> Intrusive fruit, and unattending cake;
> And if unheeded, on the stroke of four,
> With rigid hand closed the still-opening door,
> Denouncing ever after in a trice
> That heinous breach of privilege—an ice."

The extreme variety of topics discussed over the confectioner's shop is fairly indicated by Doyle; but, being excluded by rigid rule from touching any matter which had occurred within the half-century immediately preceding, the young debaters were sometimes sorely pressed for interesting subjects. Once they argued whether mathematics or metaphysics were the more beneficial as a discipline of the mind, and Mr. Gladstone championed metaphysics; but, as Henry Hallam bluntly told his brilliant son, when furnished with a summary of the controversy, "your debate is truly ridiculous." As, however, Keate objected to the Indian administration of Warren Hastings as a theme, for that had closed only forty and not a full fifty years before, topics of venerable age had to be chosen, and these were made lively enough. When the question was "Whether the deposition of Richard II. was justifiable or not?" it

was recorded in the diary of William Cowper (afterwards Lord Mount-Temple), "Gladstone spoke well. The Whigs were regularly floored; only four Whigs to eleven Tories, but they very nearly kept up with them in coughing and 'Hear, hears.'" And this same debate furnished a precedent for a striking scene which attended Mr. Gladstone's most famous speech at the Oxford Union, for Cowper went on:

Convincing an Opponent.

"Gladstone said he was sure Doyle would have courage enough to own that he was wrong. It succeeded. Doyle rose amidst reiterated cheers to own that he was convinced by the arguments on the other side. He had determined before to answer them and cut up Gladstone."

"Whether the Peerage Bill of 1719 was calculated to be beneficial or not" was a theme debated in the last month of Mr. Gladstone's sojourn at Eton; and this might have been made much more applicable to the burning questions of the day than the Warren Hastings topic to which Keate had objected. The measure would have prevented any chance of either monarch or Minister "swamping the peers," as it sought to provide that only six peerages beyond the 178 then existing should be created; and that proposition could have been linked with the politics of 1827 in general, and with Mr. Gladstone's personal susceptibilities in particular. For, just before Canning's death in that autumn, the statesman had been accused of wishing to overbear the extreme Tory majority in the House of Lords by recommending the king to create several new peers, among whom was to be John Gladstone. In other debates upon historic themes Mr. Gladstone bore a part, the most noteworthy being upon the question whether the Ministers of Anne in the last four years of her reign deserved well of their country. The manœuvres and counter-manœuvres of Harley and Bolingbroke could not but appeal to the imagination of the young combatants; and Mr. Gladstone concluded his speech upon them with this first of his perorations that have been published to the world:—

An Early Peroration.

"Thus much I have said, as conceiving myself bound in fairness not to regard the names under which men have hidden their designs so much as the designs themselves. I am well aware that my prejudices and my predilections have long been enlisted on the side of Toryism, and that in a cause like this I am not likely to be influenced unfairly against men bearing that name and professing to act on the principles which I have always been accustomed to revere. But the good of my country must stand on a higher ground than distinctions like these. In common fairness and in common candour I feel myself compelled to give my decisive verdict against the conduct of men whose measures I firmly believe to have been hostile to British interests, destructive to British glory, and subversive of the splendid and, I trust, lasting fabric of the British Constitution."

The first sentence of this peroration is an echo from Bolingbroke himself; but those who have been apt to believe that the rivalry between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli in public life was, at the outset, in the nature of the accidental rather than the essential, should especially note that while the latter at the commencement of his career laid it down that "No one was better qualified to be the Minister of a free and powerful nation than Henry St. John," the former, even as a youth, condemned the insincerity, while admiring the genius, of the most brilliant "political adventurer" in our history.

The meetings of "Pop" did not suffice to satisfy the youthful orator's desire for discussion. Not only did he and three or four more constantly gather in Gaskell's room to argue concerning Pitt and Fox, Catholic Emancipation and Free Trade, but with Gaskell, Charles Canning, and one or two others he established a more select society, "held," says Doyle, "on certain summer afternoons in the garden of one Trotman.

GRAY'S MONUMENT AT STOKE POGES.

Now Gaskell was a proficient in all the varieties of cheering—enthusiastic, ironical, crushing—which prevailed at St. Stephen's. In this accomplishment he carefully instructed his disciples. It happened that my tutor, Mr. Okes, rented a small garden near to Trotman's, and by some chance found himself there on the occasion of one of these debates. To his surprise, he heard three or four boys on the other side of the wall sneering, shouting, and boo-booing in the most unaccountable manner. There seemed but one conclusion open to him as an experienced Eton tutor—that they were under the influence of

liquor. He therefore summoned Mr. Gladstone to his study, listened gloomily and reluctantly to his explanations and excuses, and all but handed him over with his subordinate orators to be flogged for drunkenness."

That there was some ground for an Eton tutor of those years being what we might now consider strangely suspicious on the subject of liquor is evident from a reminiscence given by Mr. Gladstone himself to a friend in his latest days. The drinking habits of the times of his youth were in question, and he mentioned that whenever parties of Eton boys and Windsor choristers went on the Thames, the first thing they asked for was strong spirit. An Eton boy, in fact, would inquire for brandy—not brandy and water, but the spirit alone—as a "Christian drink"; and Mr. Gladstone said he believed he was the first to break through that custom. Another curious picture of the same period is to be found in a letter written by Charles Canning to Gaskell, just as Mr. Gladstone was leaving the school. "Handley, Gladstone, Mr. Bruce, Lord Bruce, Hodgson, and myself set up a Salt Hill Club at the end of this half. We met every whole holiday or half, as was convenient, after twelve, and went up to Salt Hill to bully the fat waiter, eat toasted cheese, and drink egg-wine. In our meetings, as well as at almost every time, Gladstone went by the name of Mr. Tipple." But though, as was the custom, Mr. Gladstone was kept provided at this period with a small supply of wine by his father, it is well known that he was never a sharer in the excess which was then the fashion in all ranks, from the king to the cottager.

**Drinking Habits at Eton.**

As to the influence of Eton upon himself, there remains ample testimony. The studies rather than the pastimes of the place were what affected him. Although fond of boating and somewhat assiduous with the sculls, he was no great oarsman, and his principal outdoor joy was walking with an argumentative companion. It was not his pleasure specially to indulge in any of the Eton pastimes that had appealed to Gray: swimming, bird-snaring, hoop-spinning, and football were not to furnish material for his boyish triumphs. But as he and Hallam took their walks—often to the monument of that poet—and indulged in argument upon topics of the gravest and most soul-searching description, Gray's lines could have been recalled telling how some of the boys

**Influence of Eton.**

> ". . . on earnest business bent,
> Their murm'ring labours ply
> 'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
> To sweeten liberty:
> Some bold adventurers disdain
> The limits of their little reign,
> And unknown regions dare descry:
> Still as they run they look behind,
> They hear a voice in every wind,
> And snatch a fearful joy."

But although in such excursions they discussed, as Mr. Gladstone's diary attests, topics of the nature of the Articles and the Creeds,

they assuredly came to no such morbid conclusion as that which filled the poet when gazing "on a distant prospect of Eton College"—

'Where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise"—

a dismal doctrine which Mr. Gladstone would emphatically have repudiated from earliest youth to extremest age. As he told Arthur Stanley, a few months after he had left the school, "Eton was a very good place for those who liked boating and Latin verses." The Latin verses of even the most brilliant youth are seldom worth recalling, and those of Mr. Gladstone remain hidden from posterity; but one of his boyish *jeux d'esprit* has been preserved—the surviving stanzas of a song written and translated by him in school, and passed to a companion—

"Don't tip me now, you lad of wax,
Your blarney and locution,
You're not a giant yet, I hope,
Nor I a lilliputian.

"Ne sis O cerâ mollior,
Grandiloquus et vanus,
Heus bone nôn es gigas tu,
Et non sum ego nanus."

Latin and Greek Acquirements.

Yet, while he shone in Latin at Eton, he was not so diligent in Greek, which, in one who was closely to link his name with Homeric scholarship, is striking, for he himself is the authority for stating that at that period he cared nothing at all about the Homeric gods, and did not for many a year. But the whole impression he received at Eton was morally and mentally sound; and in his later days he could gratefully exclaim, "My attachment to Eton increases with the lapse of years." When three decades had passed from his school-time, he was assured in the House of Commons by Roundell Palmer (afterwards Lord Chancellor in two of his Administrations) that he felt even more warmly for Eton, if that were possible, than for Christ Church. And nearly another forty years later, he himself told an assembly of Eton boys how full was his heart of love for his school, and how refreshing it was for him, as an old man, to come back among young ones, standing in the position in which he once stood himself. And his pride in Eton has been echoed by Eton's pride in him.

Beyond his expressed admiration for Canning, and the opinions uttered in various debates, not much that is distinctively political is to be associated with Mr. Gladstone during the period of his pupilage; though he is to be found writing to Hallam, immediately after the General Election of 1826, a letter "full of lamentations about Liverpool, the country, and the Ministry," a comprehensive jeremiad in which only the very young or the very old are accustomed to indulge.

Canningite, not Eldonian.

But upon the three leading topics of the time, where the Canningite or liberalised Tories were on the one side, and the Eldonian or crystallised Tories on the other, he ranged himself with the former. These questions were the liberation of Greece from Turkish rule, the emancipation of the Roman Catholics

from the last remnants of the penal laws, and the freeing of trade from burdensome restrictions. At the Montem of 1826 he appeared in Greek costume as open testimony of his sympathy with the struggling Hellenes; in Gaskell's rooms, like most of his companions who therein assembled, he favoured the Catholic claims; and his earliest inclinations towards Free Trade have been told in one of the many touches of autobiography with which his speeches abound, for it was just after he left Eton, and while reading in Cheshire for Oxford, that he visited a silk factory at Macclesfield, and was impressed with the proof of the injury Protection had inflicted. This coincides with Mr. Gladstone's other recollection of how when discussing, with a few private friends, in Gaskell's room at Eton, the initial measures of Free Trade devised by Huskisson, he was in their favour. His father, indeed, warmly supported them, and for this the statesman returned John Gladstone cordial thanks. And in this connection may be narrated an anecdote further linking Huskisson with John Gladstone, which indicates the source from which the latter's son inherited his aptitude for statistics. The story runs that Huskisson, as President of the Board of Trade, was standing under the gallery of the House while Goulburn, one of his colleagues, was struggling with a number of details on the sugar question, when he observed to one of his supporters, "Goulburn has got his facts and figures from Mr. Gladstone, and they are all as right as possible, but he doesn't understand them, and will make a hash of it."

Father and Son.

Upon the three burning questions on which, even in his pupilage, Mr. Gladstone inclined to the Liberal opinion, his ideas coincided with those of his father. When his son had been two years at Eton, John Gladstone helped in promoting a town's meeting at Liverpool, called to consider "the best means of assisting the Greeks in their present important struggle for independence." Earlier still, he had left the main body of the Tories and voted with the Whigs in the House of Commons in favour of Catholic Emancipation; and he was the staunchest Liverpool supporter of Huskisson, the Parliamentary pioneer of Free Trade. But there was another public question at that period, and that the most burning of all, upon which father and son did not see eye to eye, and where the broader view was held by the younger. It is difficult for us now to understand how men, admittedly righteous in their public dealings, and kindly in their private life, could uphold the system of colonial slavery; but unless an attempt is made to realise the feeling of that time, injustice is certain to be done.

The Slavery Question.

John Gladstone, as has earlier been shown, was not at first connected with the slave trade; but, just as he entered Parliament, he became concerned in an estate in Demerara, upon which—as upon all such estates in those days—worked a number of slaves. It was on that estate, known as Success, that in 1823 broke out a negro rising which, though soon quelled, had the most extensive and unlooked-for consequences. The Governor, a certain General Murray, proved himself so pliant a tool of the planters that he illegally imprisoned John Smith, a representative of the London Missionary Society, who had ministered to the slaves, and whose sufferings ended only in death. The storm aroused in this country by the whole astounding series of

proceedings—the petty cruelties by which the rising was provoked, and the deliberate savagery with which it was put down—blew into a flame the smouldering dislike of the system, and this flame did not burn itself out until it burnt up slavery along with it.

John Gladstone, as a slave-holder, and especially as the proprietor of an estate on which had occurred a servile insurrection, thought and spoke harshly of the Abolitionists. It was to their agitation that he publicly sought to trace the rising on Success; and he expressed the hope that this would be perceived not only by "that well-meaning but mistaken man, Mr. Wilberforce," but by "the more intemperate, credulous, designing, or interested individuals who have placed themselves in his train." But the stream of public opinion was by this time flowing too strongly against the slave-holders to allow any tone of "no surrender" on their part to be long sustained. Three years later, when contesting Berwick (he having meantime exchanged the seat at Lancaster for that at Woodstock), John Gladstone declared that he had uniformly used his best endeavours to improve the condition, increase the comforts, and promote the instruction of his slaves in every way consistent with their situation. As time went by, while always supporting the ultimately-granted claim of the slave-holders to legitimate compensation, he took an even milder tone; but right up to the period when emancipation was certain, he declared the difficulties in the way to be insurmountable, however gradual the process might be made, and declared, if asked whether the system was to be interminable, "I humbly conceive, it is not for me to attempt to say when a system should terminate which Almighty God, in the divine wisdom of His over-ruling providence, has seen fit to permit in certain climates since the origin and formation of society in this world." And yet, within a twelvemonth, his youngest son was pleading in the Oxford Union for "total but gradual emancipation."

Thus, upon a point of considerable importance in relation to his political development, Mr. Gladstone at the outset of his career was thinking for himself; but the influence exercised over him in his earlier years by his father, though often unconscious because it accorded with inherited tendency, was very great. For John Gladstone, as has been plainly indicated, was no ordinary man, and, save for the lack of the imaginative faculty, was mentally the worthy father of such a son. It is, of course, as merchant that he achieved most fame; and one who knew him well has written, "We never remember to have met a man who possessed so inexhaustible a fund of that most useful of all useful qualities, good common-sense." But as Mr. Gladstone himself has said, "While it is only for the world to look upon him mainly in the light of an active and successful merchant, who, like many merchants of this country, distinguished himself by an energetic philanthropy—so far as his children are concerned, when they think of him they can remember nothing except his extraordinary claims, surpassing even those of parents in general, upon their profound gratitude and affection."

From that father Mr. Gladstone inherited not only mental capacity but physical stamina, for the Gladstones were a race having longevity for a characteristic, as the strikingly protracted lives of the statesman's grandfather, paternal uncles, and brothers attest. He inherited likewise

ETON PLAYING FIELDS DURING MONTEM.

*(After the Picture by W. Evans.)*

that power of prolonging a sentence almost to page-point which became so marked a feature of both his literary and of his oratorical style. In one of John Gladstone's many pamphlets is to be seen a sentence positively forty lines in length; and it would be possible to produce, even from the condensed reports of the father's speeches which have come down to us, specimens of involuted explanations that might pass for the most laboured efforts of the son. And the elder, according to the younger, was not merely full of bodily and mental vigour, but could not understand or tolerate those who, perceiving an object to be good, did not at once actively pursue it. Here again is a feature of marked resemblance; and there is one other trait which the father possessed, and loved to encourage in his children, and that was an ardour for argument, carried, however, to such a point that it might have transformed a brilliant boy into a pertinacious prig.

Hereditary Qualities.

The environment of a public school had done much to prevent such a catastrophe: that of the most ancient of our Universities was to do more. From "the College of the Blessed Mary of Eton," founded by the Sixth Henry, Mr. Gladstone passed to the College of Christ Church at Oxford, which owes its continuance to the Eighth. "I tell you, sirs," had exclaimed that monarch to some courtiers who wished more monastic spoils, "that I judge no land in England better bestowed than that which is given to our Universities, for by their maintenance our realm shall be well governed when we be dead and rotten." How that prophecy has been fulfilled our history tells, and what share Christ Church has had in it is sufficiently attested by its having given to this country, in the nineteenth century alone, no fewer than eight Prime Ministers—Grenville and Liverpool, Canning and Peel, the fourteenth Earl of Derby and Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery. If it be true, as Mr. Gladstone himself has phrased it, that "the old Universities of the country have no longer a monopoly of learning and of the accomplishments of civilised life," and that "many of the most distinguished men, many of the most accomplished men, are and will be reared from this time forward, as they have been for several generations, apart from these ancient Universities," yet "an impartial observer will see that those ancient Universities have laid their foundations both broad and deep in the social life of this country, and that for a long period it will probably still remain true that Oxford and Cambridge will be to our children, as they have been to our forefathers, the great fountain-head of mental culture, the pattern and the standard after which others who have to follow and hope to do well must be contented to copy."

At Christ Church.

Mr. Gladstone's entrance at Christ Church had been preceded by that of his eldest brother, as it was in time to be succeeded by that of his two eldest sons; but Thomas, who had matriculated in February, 1823, and become Bachelor of Arts in 1827, after a creditable rather than strikingly successful career at the University, had quitted the college before William came. There may have been the further link in the mind of John Gladstone, when resolving to send his youngest son to Christ Church, that in that foundation had just been completed the brilliant course of the younger William Ewart, child of his old and now deceased friend, after

whom his own boy had been named. And on January 13th, 1828—the year in which Ewart entered Parliament for a seat which Lord Melbourne had vacated—"Gulielmus Ewart Gladstone" was admitted by Dean Smith as a commoner of Christ Church. The "good-looking, rather delicate youth, with a pale face and brown, curling hair, always tidy and well-dressed," as he was remembered at Eton, the "very good-natured" student whom Arthur Stanley encountered at the period of his entering the University, found Oxford at first to be strange. His two dearest school-friends, Hallam and George Selwyn, had gone to Cambridge; but when it was sought to send Gaskell there to bear them company, he successfully pleaded with his mother in favour of Oxford. "If you finally decide in favour of Cambridge," he urged, "my separation from Gladstone will be a source of great sorrow to me," and this because "Gladstone is no ordinary individual; and, perhaps, if I were called on to select the individual I am intimate with to whom I should first turn in an emergency, and whom I thought in every way pre-eminently distinguished for high excellence, I think I should turn to Gladstone." A not dissimilar testimony is to be read in a lament which Rogers, another Eton friend, wrote to his sister when he had moved from Oriel to Iffley in order to be near Newman: "I am beginning to get into the way of reading and of not being very miserable, which at first I was rather, for I find that the two miles divide me completely from Gladstone." But Stephen and Henry Denison, whose company Rogers also missed, had come from Eton to Christ Church, as well as Doyle and Gaskell and Charles Canning. Another Eton friend then at Oxford was Bruce, afterwards the first Lord Elgin, whom Mr. Gladstone placed, as to the natural gift of eloquence, at the head of all he knew either at school or at University, and from whom he first learned that Milton had written prose. Still others were Lord Lincoln and Hope-Scott, while friendships were now first established with Sidney Herbert and Henry Manning.

ARMS OF CHRIST CHURCH.

If a freshman came from a public school, and especially from Eton—recorded a close observer of Oxford life in those days—he had a great advantage, for Eton boys had many opportunities of moral growth, for good or evil, which those educated at other schools had not. "And so, to give him every chance, our youth shall be an Etonian; and he shall be a commoner of Christ Church. A commoner, because he will so be more perfectly upon a level with others of his own age; and at Christ Church, because there is no other college where a man has so great a chance of society, or a more entire freedom in choosing it." For some months, however, after leaving Eton and having his name inserted in the Dean's Book of Entries, Mr. Gladstone had not the opportunity of availing himself of this privilege, for he resided and read at the Cheshire rectory of Wilmslow with Dr. Turner, himself a Christ Church man, and soon, for a too brief period, to be Bishop of Calcutta. But, in the October of 1828, he went up, and then commenced the University career which made him sixty years later exclaim: "To call a man a characteristically Oxford man is, in my opinion, to give him the highest compliment that can be paid to any human being"—

*Photo: Cassell and Co., Lim.*

ROOMS OCCUPIED BY MR. GLADSTONE WHEN AT CHRIST CHURCH (*p.* 99).

which had made him, indeed, pay the even higher tribute, in the hour of his defeat for its Parliamentary representation, "I have loved the University of Oxford with a deep and passionate love; and so I shall love it to the end."

In the mere matter of scholastic training, Oxford was to him not much more than an extension and expansion of Eton; and the writer, for a purely University circle, of a description of life at Oxford just at the period of Mr. Gladstone's collegiate career, may be accepted as an authority on the subject. In the matter of general moral discipline and order, every undergraduate, he pointed out, was under the immediate jurisdiction and observation of his tutor; above him, of the heads of his college; and, finally, he was under the general authority of the proctors. By all he was treated as a man, interference with his pursuits being avoided, unless for good cause. His tutor directed his studies and gave him advice; his college required him to attend regularly in chapel, to be within the walls before midnight, and to submit to certain rules regarding expenditure; while the proctors had full jurisdiction to keep him within the limits of University regulations. As to the curriculum, a "respectable proficiency" in the dead languages was required of all who aspired to a degree, but a greater stress was laid upon a knowledge of the Bible and the Evidences of Christianity, while "some proficiency" was expected in mathematics or in the science of reasoning. To win a first or second class necessitated extensive reading, general information, and ample thought; to become a Bachelor of Arts, a close acquaintance with Aristotle was demanded; other indispensable

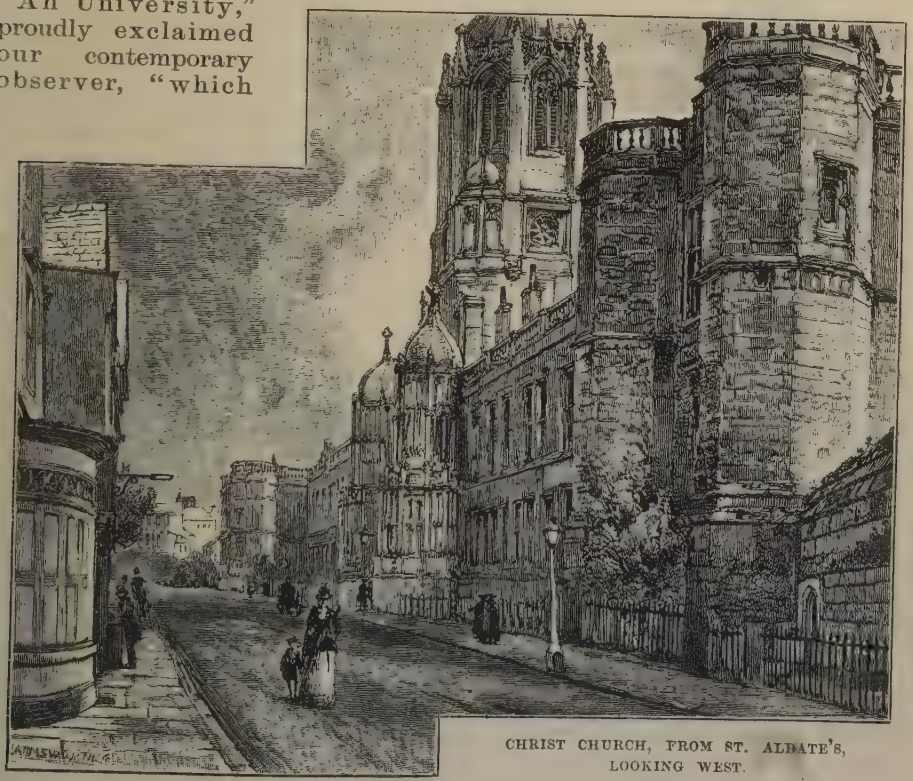
**The Oxford System.**

authors were the Greek historians, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon; the tragic poets; Livy or Tacitus, Horace, Virgil, and Juvenal; and to these by individual candidates were frequently added Demosthenes and Cicero. But while great stress was laid upon a knowledge of logic, translation into Latin, and original composition in English prose, the candidate, above everything, was expected to be well informed upon all subjects appertaining to religion.

The college lectures, which every student was obliged to attend once, twice, or even three times a day, consisted of little more than the construing of some Greek or Latin author by the class, with such occasional remarks as were suited to the comprehension of the majority of the hearers. But any deficiency in this system was made up for to a large extent by the University lecturers.

**The University Lectures.**

"An University," proudly exclaimed our contemporary observer, "which has a Buckland to lecture on Geology, a Rigaud on Natural Philosophy, a Kidd on Anatomy, a Mills on Moral Philosophy, and a Cardwell on History, can never be said to neglect the diffusion of useful knowledge in any of its branches. We might add to these the lecturers on Chemistry, Poetry, Sanscrit, and Political Economy; and, above all, the labours of Dr. Burton and Mr. Pusey." (Let it be said in passing



CHRIST CHURCH, FROM ST. ALDATE'S, LOOKING WEST.

that Mr. Gladstone specially profited by the Divinity lectures of the one, and the Hebrew instruction of the other.) And, in addition, there was the system by which all who aspired to University distinction read individually with private tutors, who were thus able to accommodate the instruction to the capacity. Hence it might fairly be claimed that, while the general Oxford system at that time suited itself to the wants and the capacities of the greater number of students, the man of talent was at no loss for a field for his exertions, nor was he in danger of missing the reward of his industry.

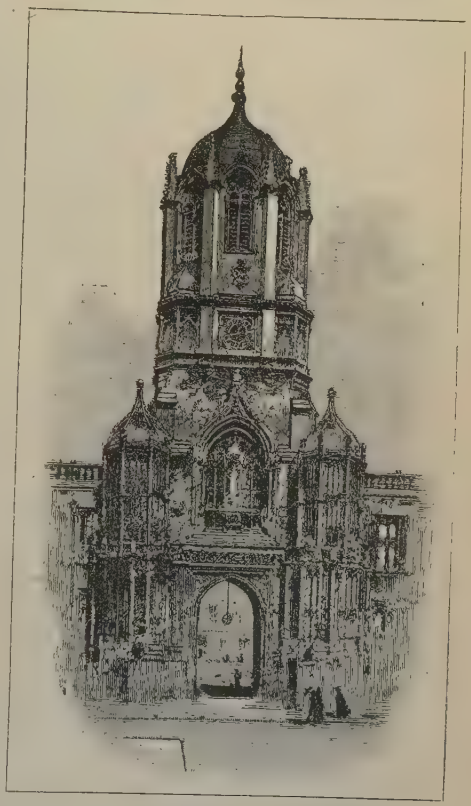
But neither hard work in the study nor success in the schools can be considered everything in estimating the result of the Oxford training: the effect of the mental and moral atmosphere upon an impressionable mind at a most impressionable period of life has also to be taken into account. "Unless," wrote the authority already quoted, "the undergraduate is so perverse as to set himself entirely against the prevailing tone of feeling which pervades all classes in Oxford, he will probably acquire from conviction, as well as prejudice, a spirit of devoted loyalty; of warm attachment to the liberties and ancient institutions of his country; a dislike and dread of rash innovation; and an admiration approaching to reverence for our orthodox and Apostolical church. This leads by an easy and natural step to serious meditation upon the vital matter of religion; and this contributes more than anything to strengthen the good resolutions, and settle the character, of a high-minded young man." That the portion of this estimate which deals with politics was correct can be shown from Mr. Gladstone's own statement of half a century later: "I trace in the education of Oxford of my own time one great defect. Perhaps it was my own fault, but I must admit that I did not learn when I was at Oxford that which I have learned since — namely, to set a due value on the imperishable and the inestimable principles of British liberty. The temper which I think too much prevailed in academical circles was that liberty was regarded with jealousy and fear, something which could not wholly be dispensed with, but which was continually to be watched for fear of excesses. I think it was viewed, on the whole, with a temper which abridged and controlled most unduly that generous appreciation of the value of freedom in itself which is both among the most suitable ornaments and among the truest and most permanent elements of wisdom." But as to the religious point, with certain qualifications later to be shown, there is to be noted the remembrance of Frederick Oakeley, that at Christ Church, at this very period, "the only way in which religion, as such, was put before us was in the public prayers at the college, than which nothing could well have been more adverse to its proper influence. The services were so managed that it would have been hardly possible for anyone to make a good use of them, even had he wished it, and I do not think that such a wish was largely shared. Little or no care was taken to secure the decent behaviour of those who attended chapel as a general rule; and it was only when that behaviour broke out, as was sometimes the case in the evening, into the most disgraceful irreverence, that authorities interposed to control it."

**Authority and Liberty.**

**Religion.**

With much precision the rooms which Mr. Gladstone occupied during

the greater portion of his collegiate time are pointed out as being those on the first floor (left hand) of the first staircase on the right as Canterbury Gate is entered—Canterbury Gate that is itself the entrance to a quadrangle built on the site of what once was Canterbury College, of which Wyclif had been warden and Sir Thomas More a student. Their common description is "Cant. II. 7," that is, No. 7 set on No. II. staircase in Canterbury quadrangle. His earliest tutor was Robert Biscoe, of Christ Church, whose famous lectures on Aristotle he attended, and also, as has been noted, those of Burton on Divinity and Pusey on Hebrew. The last-named had only just been appointed Regius Professor of Hebrew, an office to which was attached a canonry of Christ Church, and to his lectures he attracted an unusual number of young men eager to have Hebrew set before them in religiously effective form. At the Aristotle class Mr. Gladstone, according to the once well-known Martin Tupper, another of its members, was "the central figure—ever from youth up the beloved and admired of many personal intimates: always the foremost man, warm-hearted, earnest, hard-working, and religious, he had a following even in his teens." On the Christmas Eve of 1829, as the Christ Church records show, he was made Student of the House—it was as "Student of Christ Church" that he signed his name to his earliest published book—and thereafter he laboured steadily and well until he had taken the highest scholastic honours Oxford could give.



THE TOM TOWER, CHRIST CHURCH.

But study did not absorb his every thought, for between himself and Hallam, after the one had gone to Oxford and the other to Cambridge, there was continued a correspondence which testified to their abiding friendship; and one of Hallam's letters brings us into touch with an episode that has linked with that friendship the then unknown but now immortal names of Thackeray and Tennyson. A gold medal was annually awarded at Cambridge for a poem, the subject for which took a wide range. Previous to 1829 the themes had been as varied as Columbus and Boadicea, Wallace and Mahomet, Jerusalem and Rome, Palmyra and Pompeii; and now there was given the astonishing theme

**Hallam, Tennyson, and Thackeray.**

of the then mysterious and unexplored African region of Timbuctoo. Tennyson, taking as a text the lines of Chapman—

> "Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies
> A mystic city, goal of high emprise"—

drew a glowing picture of this home of mystery, closing with the melancholy reflection of the informing Spirit—

> "The time is well-nigh come
> When I must render up this glorious home
> To keen Discovery: soon yon brilliant towers
> Shall darken with the waving of her wand;
> Darken and shrink and shiver into huts,
> Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,
> Low-built, mud-wall'd, barbarian settlements.

The very theme lent itself, however, to jest; and, in a poem naturally not sent to the authorities, though published in the University magazine, the *Snob*, Thackeray treated it in the true spirit of burlesque, concluding with lines that had some of the grimness of unconscious prophecy:—

> "The day shall come when Albion's self shall feel
> Stern Afric's wrath, and writhe 'neath Afric's steel.
> I see her tribes the hill of glory mount,
> And sell their sugars on their own account;
> While round her throne the prostrate nations come,
> Sue for her rice, and barter for her rum."

Though Hallam also competed, it was Tennyson who won the medal; and, writing in the September of 1829 to Mr. Gladstone, Hallam indulged in criticism and prophecy, both worthy of note: "I am glad you liked my queer piece about Timbuctoo. I wrote it in a sovereign vein of poetic scorn for anybody's opinion who did not value Plato and Milton just as much as I did. . . . My friend Tennyson's poem got the prize. . . . The splendid imaginative power that pervades it will be seen through all hindrances. I consider Tennyson as promising fair to be the greatest poet of our generation, perhaps of our century."

The interest thus aroused in the Cambridge lovers of poetry was strengthened in Mr. Gladstone's case by the memorable visit to Oxford in the following November of Arthur Hallam, Monckton Milnes, and another Cambridge student of similarly brilliant promise, named Sunderland, to maintain in debate the superiority of Shelley to Byron. Doyle and Mr. Gladstone were responsible for the invitation; and the former, in his closing days, spoke somewhat sourly of his old friend's association with this very striking inter-university event, saying that he "had really very little to do with the business, except that he came afterwards to supper—a feat that might have been accomplished with equal success by a man of much inferior genius." But Mr. Gladstone's own account of the affair—given in conversation with the biographer of Manning, another friend of his youth—is at once more genial and more illuming:—

**Debate on Shelley and Byron.**

> "There was an invasion of barbarians among civilised men, or of civilised men among barbarians. Cambridge men used to look down upon us at Oxford as prim and behind the times. A deputation from Cambridge came to set up amongst us the cult of

THE DINING HALL, CHRIST CHURCH.

*Photo: Gillman and Co., Oxford.*

Shelley; or, at any rate, to introduce the school of Shelley as against the Byronic school at Oxford—Shelley, that is, not on his negative but on his spiritual side. I believe I was the intermediary in bringing about the discussion, and we vied with each other in entertaining our Cambridge assailants. I know in that, at least, I took a foremost part; but I did not take part in the discussion at the Union."

Manning agreed that "Mr. Gladstone was the author of all the mischief in bringing the barbarians from Cambridge down upon us." And this one of Monckton Milnes's impressions of the moment remains of permanent value: "The man that *took* me most was the youngest Gladstone of Liverpool—I am sure, a very superior person."

By a slight lapse of memory, Mr. Gladstone in after years thought that this deputation had come from the Society of Apostles at Cambridge, and not from the one Union to the other; but the slip is pardonable, because the former body had a special interest for him, as it has for us. It had been started in 1820 as the Conversazione Society, but the nickname of "Apostles," applied in derision, was adopted by the members; and an institution which included within ten years Charles Buller and John Sterling, Frederick Denison Maurice and Richard Chenevix Trench, Charles Merivale and James Spedding, Henry Alford and Monckton Milnes, Arthur Hallam and Alfred Tennyson, could take any name and be famous. Carlyle has written of it: "On stated evenings was much logic, and other spiritual fencing, and ingenuous collision—probably of a really superior quality in that kind; for not a few of the then disputants have since proved themselves men of parts, and attained distinction in the intellectual walks of life." Its members did not specifically discuss Shakspere and the musical glasses, but their range of topics was just as wide. "Have Shelley's poems an immoral tendency?" "Is an intelligible First Cause deducible from the phenomena of the universe?" "Is there any rule of moral action beyond general expediency?"—such were some of the questions considered. Debates upon the origin of evil and the derivation of moral sentiments were mingled with the reading of Hobbes and Locke, Berkeley and Butler, Descartes and Kant; but there were times when even these solemn youths unbent, and Tennyson, who was one of them, was told, concerning an Apostolic dinner at which his health had been drunk in his absence: "Most of them stayed till past two. John Heath volunteered a song; Kemble got into a passion about nothing, but quickly jumped out again; Blakesley was afraid the Proctor might come in; and Thompson poured large quantities of salt upon Douglas Heath's head because he talked nonsense."

"The Apostles."

The influence of this body spread to Oxford. Maurice had been one of its foremost men; and when he took the unusual course of exchanging the one University for the other, he found, through the medium of "the Apostles," a welcome from Mr. Gladstone awaiting him. Hallam had written to his friend concerning Maurice: "The effect which he has produced on the minds of many at Cambridge by the single creation of that society of 'Apostles' (for the spirit, though not the form, was created by him) is far greater than I can dare to calculate, and will be felt both directly and indirectly in the age that is upon us." Mr. Gladstone was inspired to emulation, and he established upon this model, though upon somewhat broader

"The Weg."

lines, a select debating club, consisting mainly of Christ Church men, formally known as "the Oxford Essay Club," but more commonly as "the Weg," after the initials of its founder. The members — among whom were Doyle, Gaskell, Rogers, Lincoln, and Bruce — assembled in each other's rooms, and the sort of mental food provided is to be gathered from Mr. Gladstone's own contribution of an essay upon Socrates' belief in immortality. Maurice, upon coming to Oxford, was at once admitted because of his connection with "the Apostles"; and many years later he wrote to his son, who had just seen Mr. Gladstone for the first time, "His face is a very expressive one; hard-worked and not, perhaps, specially happy; more indicative of struggle than of victory, though not without promise of that. I admire him for his patient attention to details, and for the pains which he takes to secure himself from being absorbed in them by entering into large and generous studies."

*Photo: Taunt and Co., Oxford.*

ENTRANCE TO CHRIST CHURCH FROM THE CLOISTERS

Many an indication has come down to us of the excellent influence Mr. Gladstone exercised upon his contemporaries at Oxford, where such influence was needed, though—as Frederick Oakeley, in his reminiscences of the Christ Church of this period, has recorded—both in a moral and a religious sense it was in a state of progressive improvement. "Some young men of what was called the Evangelical party had now come into residence there; and as they were amiable as well as religious, and as there was sufficient good-feeling among their contemporaries to secure them against molestation, even if not to obtain for them a certain respect, they had an influence for good beyond the sphere of the small circle in which they lived." Mr. Gladstone was one of these young men, for, like Newman, he had been bred in a strictly Evangelical school. Afterwards he held that while, in the main, these Evangelical ideas were productive of great good, they created in him an intolerance in his youth which cabined, cribbed, and confined the intellect. But his religious ideas at Eton were those

**Evangelical Influences.**

which he carried to Oxford, with the consequence that we find a more worldly-minded friend expressing regret that "Gladstone has mixed himself up as much as he has done with the St. Mary Hall and Oriel set"—in which, it is significant to recall, Newman was the dominating influence—"who are really, for the most part, only fit to live with maiden aunts and keep tame rabbits." It was, further, "on the part of the Evangelicals" that, in debate at the Union, he opposed the removal of Jewish disabilities, a position he abandoned comparatively early in his career as a statesman, though the change threatened to cost him the University seat. And other striking evidence of his religious leanings at that period is available. "I doubt," wrote in after years his tutor, Charles Wordsworth, later Bishop of St. Andrews, "whether any man of his standing in the University habitually read the Bible more or knew it better than Gladstone did. Whether it was owing to this or the natural sobriety of his temperament, or to both combined, it is certain that, notwithstanding all his capacity for future distinction, of which he could not but be conscious, he showed no signs of pride or vanity or affectation; on the contrary, I should say he was uniformly modest and unassuming." And this was the testimony also of Oakeley, who reminiscently described Mr. Gladstone as one "who, as an undergraduate of Christ Church, was an example to his companions of the possibility of combining youthful virtue with that deportment of humility and social kindliness which is best calculated to win others to the imitation of it."

The bent of his tastes may be seen in the facts that while an Oxonian he was noted for his regular attendance at chapel; that he became a subscriber to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; and that he wrote, in an interleaved copy of the "Analogy," a chapter "On the Mediation of Christ," which he included more than sixty years later in his "Studies Subsidiary to Butler's Works." It was before the days of "the Oxford Movement," and Newman was not then known as the inspiring preacher he was to become; but even previous to the era of the controversies with which his name will always be linked, he was, as Mr. Gladstone has recalled, a great object of interest in the University, though, singular as it now may seem, looked upon with some prejudice as a Low Churchman. Mr. Gladstone, as an undergraduate, heard Newman preach at St. Mary's, when, "taking the man as a whole, there was a stamp and seal upon him; there was a solemn music and sweetness in the tone; there was a completeness in the figure, taken together with the tone and with the manner, which made even his delivery, with written sermons, singularly attractive." And, at the risk of rebuke and even of rustication, Mr. Gladstone went twice with a friend to a Nonconformist place of worship, to hear on one occasion Dr. Chalmers and on another Rowland Hill, the former of whom was later to influence the politico-ecclesiastical side of his career.

**A Lost Scholarship.**

The one disappointment of Mr. Gladstone's University life was his failure to win the Ireland Scholarship awarded for classical composition. For this he had laboured hard, and, after spending the Long Vacation of 1830 with a small reading party at Cuddesdon vicarage, he was able to tell Charles Wordsworth, even in the midst of the joys of Christmastide, that he had been working at his Latin. But when the examination came,

THE THIRD DRAGOON GUARDS SUPPRESSING A REFORM RIOT AT BRISTOL, IN 1831.

*(From a Drawing by T. L. Rowbotham.)*

in the spring, he failed, being bracketed second with Scott, afterwards Dean of Rochester, to a Liverpool boy named Brancker, on the books of Wadham, but still at Shrewsbury School. The then Senior Censor of Christ Church, the well-known Thomas Vowler Short, told Mr. Gladstone that not only had his essay been "desultory beyond belief," but that he had attempted to throw dust in the examiner's eyes, for, when asked "Who wrote 'God Save the King'?" he had replied, "Thomson wrote 'Rule, Britannia.'" Brancker, it was added, "answered *all* the questions short, and *most* of them right"; and the hint should not have been lost upon one whose desire to be exact ofttimes made him diffuse.

"I think," wrote Mr. Gladstone to his tutor, immediately after this defeat, "it will probably have the effect of keeping me here till after the vacation, as after losing this scholarship I should scarcely feel that I had done my duty towards the college if I did not resume my mathematics." He did resume them, and his classics likewise, and before 1831 had run its course he had done his duty towards the college worthily and well. For, despite the excitements and allurements of the overwhelming agitation then raging around the subject of Parliamentary reform, he worked with such a will as to justify that tutor's declaration, even after the failure over the Ireland, that he was "a certain double first." In the November, "Gladstone, Gulielmus E., ex Æde Christi," was announced as one of the five in the first class in Literis Humanioribus; in the December, he was again one of five in the first class in mathematics and physics, with him in each list, and, therefore, as a co-double-first, being his old Eton friend and Christ Church colleague Henry Denison; and on the 26th of January, 1832, he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

**University Distinctions.**

"The illustrious Gladstone has been bachelorised," wrote Doyle to Charles Wordsworth; and "the illustrious Gladstone" was speedily to justify the jesting epithet. That justification was to be afforded, as is in this world so often the case, by a measure which the young collegian himself had bitterly opposed. In March, 1831, when telling his tutor of the Ireland disappointment, he had not a word to say of the Reform Bill, though its introduction in that month had convulsed the country from end to end. But he was very soon in the thick of the fight. His eldest brother was sitting in Parliament at the moment for the now disfranchised constituency of Queenborough; and, greatly to the annoyance of John Gladstone (who, like his political idol, Canning, detested the very name of Parliamentary reform), he voted in the majority of one which carried the second reading of the Bill, and thus secured the acceptance by the House of Commons of the vital principle it contained. It may, therefore, have been as the result of pressure from at home that Thomas Gladstone soon repented his action; and, being one of the few who changed sides, he supported, in April, the once notorious Gascoyne amendment, which strangled the Bill and precipitated a dissolution that rendered Reform inevitable. But a fortnight before that fatal vote—for Thomas found no seat in the new Parliament—his youngest brother had been taking his first active step in politics. He went to what was formally described as "a public meeting of the nobility, gentry, clergy,

**The Reform Bill.**

freeholders and inhabitant householders of the county of Warwick, convened by the high sheriff, and held at Warwick." This assembly agreed to an address to the Crown endorsing the Reform Bill, and praying for a dissolution in case of defeat; it also adopted a petition to the House of Commons averring that "the present disproportional and corrupt state of the representation of the people is a most alarming grievance, demanding immediate and effectual redress." Mr. Gladstone, adopting the pen-name of "Spectator," at once wrote his impressions of this assembly to the staunch Tory *Standard*, then only an evening journal; and he led off with the declaration that "the advocates of the Reform Bill have, as I think will be generally admitted, been much more assiduous in establishing cases of anomaly than of grievance, and more ready to appeal to the manifestation of popular will than to abide the contest of argument and the decision of truth. . . . Now, what do anomalies signify? Who would not gladly purchase one single substantial advantage at the price of ten thousand verbal absurdities?" And, in place of peroration, he exclaimed: "If, sir, the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, if the sterling sense and stable principle of the country generally, are to be alarmed, overawed, or smothered by the expression of popular opinion from meetings such as this—and if no great statesman be raised up in our hour of need to undeceive this unhappy multitude, now eagerly rushing or heedlessly sauntering along the pathway of revolution 'as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or a fool to the correction of the stocks,' what is it but a symptom, as infallible as it is appalling, that the day of our greatness and stability is no more, and that the chill and damps of death are already creeping over England's glory? May God avert the omen!"

"Gladstone is quite furious in the cause," wrote Charles Wordsworth to his brother in that same month of April. "Gladstone is very bitter against the Reform Bill," Hallam made simultaneous note. There was fury and bitterness, indeed, on both sides of the controversy, and at Bristol and elsewhere the military had to be requisitioned to suppress riot. Mr. Gladstone's feeling was publicly as well as privately displayed. The always memorable denunciation of the Bill at the Union in May, which is dealt with in the next chapter, was followed in June by Mr. Gladstone taking the leading part in drafting, with the assistance of Lincoln and Charles Wordsworth, a petition to the House of Commons against Reform, intended to be signed by resident bachelors and undergraduates of the University. This first formal declaration of Mr. Gladstone's political faith ran thus:—

**Petitioning against Reform.**

"That the Bill of Reform lately submitted to Parliament seems to your Petitioners far more than commensurate with any existing amount of grievances, which, however, appears to be the legitimate test of the necessity of change, and the measure of its extent. That the balance of powers is the vital principle of the British Constitution, but that this balance is necessarily destroyed if of the old Elective Body, the Aristocratic portion be disfranchised at once, the popular only in reversion, so that the entire weight is removed from one scale, while it is permitted to remain in the other. That anomalies are only defensible when found by experience to be beneficial in their effects, but that this measure introduces a system of untried anomalies, and moreover thus affords to the ill-affected a specious plea for continued innovations. That it promises to admit an alarming proportion of Roman

(Photo: Gillman and Co., Oxford.

GENERAL VIEW OF OXFORD.

Catholic influence into Parliament, and thereby falsifies the implied pledge of conservation of existing establishments under which many were induced to vote in favour of the Roman Catholic Claims. That, notwithstanding experience has shown that an Aristocratical Order cannot co-exist with a popular assembly, except by an influence to be exerted in that assembly, the measure aims at leaving the Three Estates of the Realm to act independently of all mutual communication and controul, so that, should collision arise, it will be unmitigated by any reciprocal sympathies in the different members of the Legislative Body, and tend to disorganise the whole mechanism of the Government. That the popular clamour recently excited has been urged as the strongest argument in favour of this particular measure of Reform, which ought never to carry any weight, except in cases where its sentence is found, on independent grounds, to be reasonable. And, further, that as this cry indicates its tone and character, not a deliberate desire for the remedy of evils, but a rash and intemperate spirit, looking to ulterior measures rather than practical relief, any concession granted specifically to such a demand will inevitably increase whatever of evil there might be in a refusal. That your Petitioners, however alien to their condition the expression of any opinion on political questions might appear under ordinary circumstances, and however reluctant to intrude on the attention of the Legislature, are nevertheless unwilling to contemplate such results in silence, and therefore most humbly and earnestly pray your Honourable House that the said Bill may not pass into a Law."

More than one point in this document, apart from its bearing upon the politics of the moment or the policy of the Reform Bill, merits attention. Its inspirer was in unconscious agreement with the idea later to be promulgated by his leading political rival: "We shall never make the Constitution of England a strictly logical one, and I do not think that it is desirable that we should try." And his scorn of the argument from anomaly was of a piece with his expressed contempt in the *Standard* for those speakers at the Warwick meeting who had "seemed to think the necessity of reform demonstrated when an anomaly had been proved." But, at the moment, the Oxford authorities did not recognise the coming statesman: all that they perceived was the recalcitrant undergraduate; and they dealt with the latter by endeavouring to stay the flow of signatures and even to capture the petition. The effect was to send it to Westminster at once, with 770 names attached out of the thousand or so resident bachelors and undergraduates; but it is in fairness to be remembered that, in attempting to stop the petition, the proctors had acted strictly upon a precedent of two years previously, when, a memorial against Roman Catholic Emancipation having for the first time been presented by undergraduates, and a counter-petition having been prepared, a proctor intervened, demanded the latter document at the shop where it lay for signature, and carried it away under his sleeve. The verses then written upon the incident might well have been recalled now by Mr. Gladstone and his friends—

"We Proctors and Pros, being deadly foes
To boys' unsanction'd exhibition,
Both pro and con do seize upon
And hereby quench your sage Petition;
And if you ask why your fine task
Thus finds itself in sad quandary,
You have, dear boys, with all your noise,
No *voice* while in *statu pupillari*."

And this very phrase had been used at the sister University only two months before, when, after a notice had been issued, calling a meeting

of bachelors of arts and undergraduates to petition against the Reform Bill, the authorities admonished "all persons in *statu pupillari* that everyone who attends this or any similar meeting will be proceeded against as a violator of the discipline of the University." When the petition, which had thus slipped through the hands of the proctors, was presented to the House of Commons by Lord Mahon, the future historian avowed his satisfaction that a declaration of attachment to our ancient institutions should be the first step in a career which might, he trusted, prove one of private worth and public usefulness to all and each of its signatories. But Lord Morpeth (afterwards, as seventh Earl of Carlisle, a Ministerial colleague of the chief petitioner) more nearly touched the mark in the hope he expressed that when they had had the opportunity, in advanced life, of mixing with large masses of their countrymen, they would see reason to entertain sentiments more in unison with the wishes of the people.

The opportunity thus indicated as desirable came to Mr. Gladstone long before he had reached advanced life. It came to him, indeed, less than a twelvemonth later, and because of the dissolution of Parliament necessitated by the passing of the very measure he had so strenuously denounced. When leaving Oxford, he urged his father to allow him to enter the Church, but John Gladstone had other views and vetoed the proposal. Statesmanship and not ecclesiasticism was the father's chosen destiny for the son: though himself long known as "a builder of churches," he preferred to see his most brilliant son in politics rather than in the pulpit. The Church, indeed, did not occupy the commanding position in men's thoughts that it was soon afterwards to hold; and it may further be that John Gladstone shared the common view of the moment, soon to be dispelled, that there was then a dearth of young men giving promise as politicians. Whatever the reason, William Gladstone was designated for a Parliamentary life, and with characteristic energy he set to work to prepare himself for St. Stephen's. This duteous compliance with his father's wish may account for the story that, in that *annus mirabilis* 1832, to a congratulation from the poet Wordsworth upon his son's success at Oxford, John Gladstone replied: "My son has certainly distinguished himself greatly at the University, and I trust he will continue to do so when he enters public life, for there is no doubt he is a man of great ability, but he has no stability." The student of John Gladstone's style scarcely recognises it here, and the tale as told has an improbable ring; but that the son desired to enter the Church, and that, at the father's call, he sought the Senate, is undoubted. And it was while he was enjoying, after his hard work at the University, a sojourn in Italy—a land which was materially to affect his political career and add to its international usefulness—that he received in June, 1832, an offer from the Duke of Newcastle, inspired by his old college friend, Lincoln, to contest for the first Reformed Parliament the borough of Newark-upon-Trent.

Leaving Oxford.

ALFRED F. ROBBINS.

MET. BOROUGH OF POPLAR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

# CHAPTER II.

## MR. GLADSTONE AND THE OXFORD UNION SOCIETY.

Oxford and Cambridge Compared—Conditions out of which Grew the Oxford Union Society—Mr. Gladstone Elected a Member—Sir Francis Doyle's Picture of the Union—Political Consistency—Mr. Gladstone's First Speech—Debates on Fox and Canning—Mr. Gladstone as Secretary and President—His Attitude towards Dissenters and Jews—His Views on Education—Attack on the Duke of Wellington—Coleridge's Influence on Mr. Gladstone's Ecclesiastical Views—A Free Trade Debate—Predominance of Eton and Christ Church in the Union—Maurice and the "Weg"—Peel and the Catholic Relief Bill—Parliamentary Reform—Robert Lowe: Doyle's Amusing Reminiscences—An Apt Retort—Mr. Gladstone's Place in the Union—His Finest Speech—Gladstone and Manning—Disraeli's Taunt—The Reply—Universities and Political Questions—Mr. Gladstone's Last Union Debate.

AMONG the many striking incidents in Mr. Gladstone's undergraduate career at Oxford, none is better calculated to attract and engage the attention than the part which he played in the Oxford Union Society—as debater, legislator, and administrator. Mr. Purcell has said of Cardinal Manning that the Union was to his youthful what the Vatican Council was to his more mature ambitions. Substitute the House of Commons for the Vatican Council, and the saying becomes even more true of Mr. Gladstone. The Dons, or rather the less human of the Dons, have always disliked the Society as "likely to lead young men to form premature ideas." Undoubtedly the spirit of dialectic is so strong at Oxford that young men *are* likely to lead others to form ideas; and ideas, whether right or wrong, can always be labelled "premature" by a tutor who wants to produce, not a good man, but a good examinee. Ideas are peculiarly contagious in Oxford.

But why? Why—and the influences which Mr. Gladstone experienced and exerted in the Union force upon us the trite but unanswered question—why is Oxford the home of movements, and Cambridge the home of man? Why is Cambridge connected with scientific discovery, and Oxford with religious emotion? How are we to explain—and the third query is intimately associated with the former two—that characteristic difference in the aim and the end which tempts the young Oxonian to splash about on the surface of politics, while his Cambridge rival plunges into the safer and securer waters of historical research? In a word, why are Gladstone and Darwin, Newman and Macaulay, the typical great men of the two ancient English Universities? A philosopher might solve the problem; a biographer may only state it. A Cambridge politician or an Oxford Don may resent as a groundless imputation what we believe to be an innocent and even suggestive truth; but the impartial alien can obtain ocular demonstration by a visit to the debating hall of the Oxford Union Society, where are hung the portraits of the eminent men whom the Union delighted to honour in their undergraduate days. Certainly the colouring, if not the form, of Mr. Gladstone's

**Oxford and Cambridge compared.**

career would have been altered if he had followed his friends Arthur Hallam and Monckton Milnes to Cambridge.

At the beginning of this century what little intellectual activity existed at Oxford was decentralised in the colleges. Apart from its formal constitution the University had no common life. The different colleges had their own lectures and their own little systems. Like Fielding's squire and parson, they were usually in a state of civil war, or, what is worse, of civil law. A clever and industrious man had to choose between the alternatives of finding congenial friends in the restricted but not necessarily select society of his own foundation, or of leading the life of a recluse. Such a state of things was only possible in the golden age of Toryism, when political intercourse was interdicted, and serious discussion silenced; when "fear, religion, ambition and self-interest—everything that could tempt and everything that could deter—were enlisted on the side of dominant opinions;" when high thinking meant something worse than plain living, and when even within the Anglican Church "clergymen suspected of thinking that in the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* Mackintosh had got the better of Burke, were ousted from their college fellowships as atheists or left to starve without a curacy as radicals."*

But with the close of the Napoleonic wars, the first rumblings of the coming political convulsions began to be heard in the country; and Oxford, who feels even when she is repelled, began to show a desire to discuss and defend her own reactionary principles. To this nervous sympathy may be traced the foundation of the Oxford Union Society, which grew, according to the account of John Taylor Coleridge, out of a small debating club called the Attic Society. However founded, it at once began to assume an offensive importance in the eyes of the authorities, who proceeded to enhance its popularity by systematic discouragement. It became an invaluable school of rhetoric for those who had hitherto only studied the art in Aristotle, a little parliament where the lines of college jealousies were everywhere cut by individual and party rivalries. However much the pious historian may be inclined to emphasise the greatness of the Union, it is only fair to say that the society has never fallen into the error of exaggerating its own importance and usefulness. Indeed, a marked note of diffidence runs through its proceedings and collective judgments. At the age of five it was only induced by a very narrow majority to affirm "that eloquence has produced greater good than evil to mankind"; and more than half a century later it voted, by a majority of three, "that this House deplores its past history as recorded in the minutes of public business." It was with the winter term of 1829 that there began what the present Bodley Librarian has called "the heroic age of the society." In the minutes for Thursday, October 22nd, 1829, may be found recorded:—

**Foundation of the Society.**

**Mr. Gladstone's Election.**

"The Society elected
Mr. Gladstone Ch. Ch.
Mr. Strangways Ch. Ch."

* Life of Macaulay: Trevelyan, vol. i., p. 156.

Gladstone's old friend Sir Francis Doyle has given a delightful picture of the Union at this time:—

"As soon as Mr. Gladstone dawned upon the Union, which was not, as I have said, in the earlier days of his undergraduateship, he took the first place. How far this pre-eminence was gained by eclipsing his predecessor Manning, and how far because Manning, whose degree time was approaching, withdrew from our debate to fall back on his books,

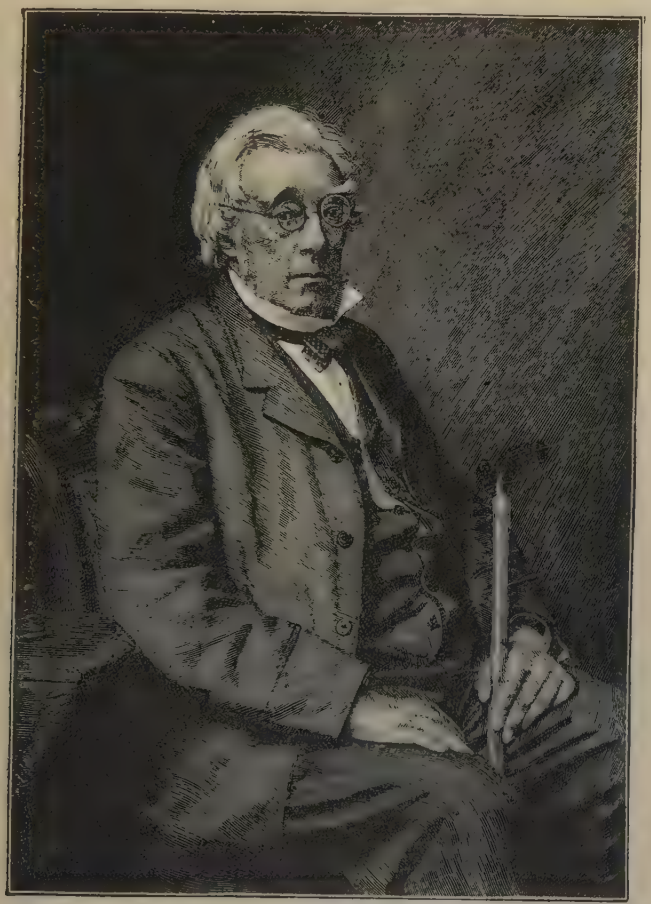


*Photo: Bassano, Old Bond Street, W.*

SIR FRANCIS DOYLE.

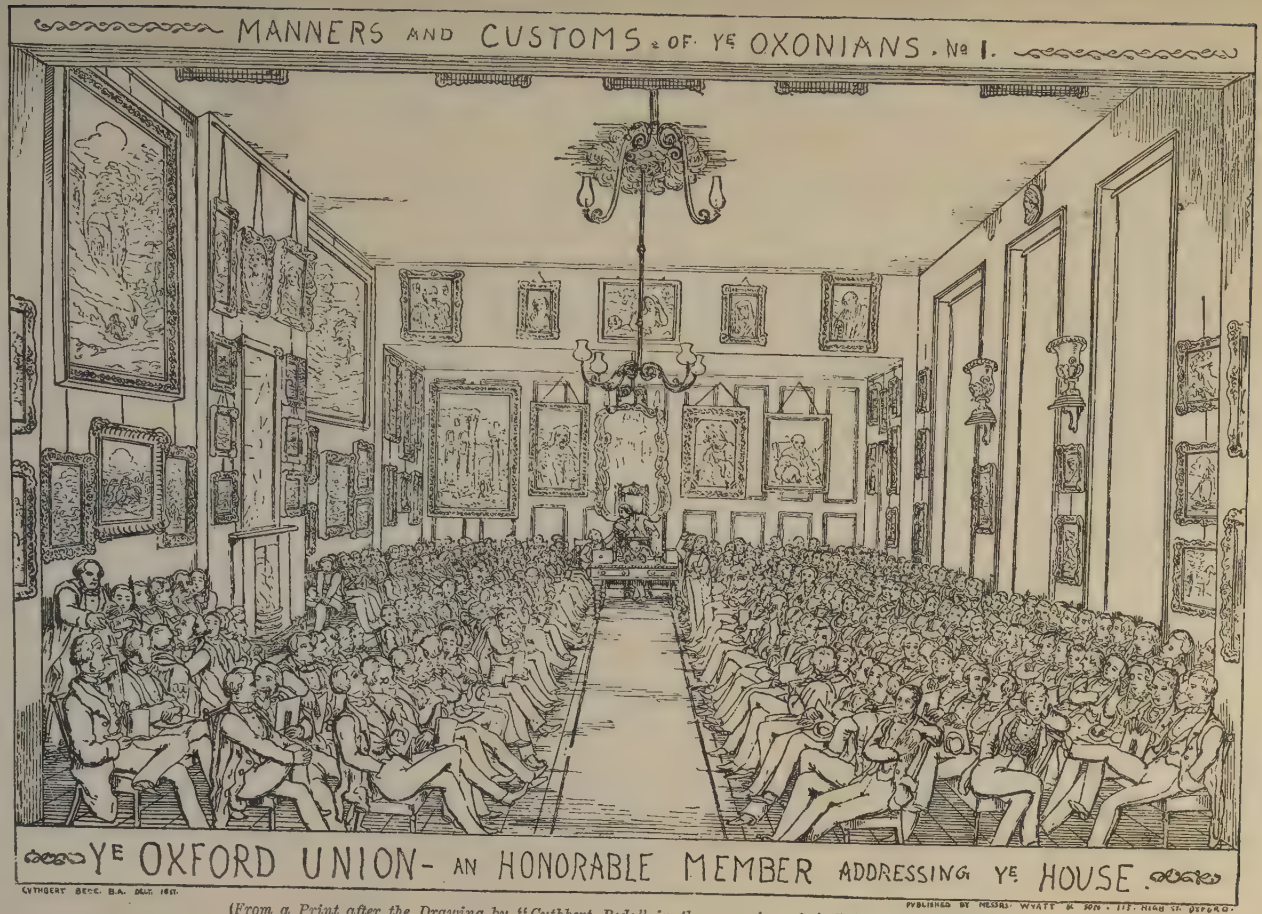
I do not know. My impression, at any rate, is that the two were not in full activity very long together. Gladstone and Gaskell became the leading Christ Church speakers. Henry Wilberforce and Harding, taking a tone somewhat different from this, upheld the reputation of Oriel. Henry Wilberforce in particular exhibited an easy grace and facility, such as the Wilberforces, one and all, seem to have inherited from their distinguished father."

Doyle goes on to say that the speaking was not confined to regular debates. "Private matters—*e.g.* whether we should take in *The Sporting Magazine* or not, were argued about with great earnestness, and what was said on those occasions showed now and then a life and reality which our formal harangues often wanted." Certainly the change from Wyatt's rooms in the High Street to its present debating hall has not been accompanied by any corresponding deflection from that love of formalism and delight in solemn trifling which marked the society in its infancy. The moderns are imitative, if degenerate. When Monckton Milnes came from Cambridge for the Byron *v.* Shelley debate he was struck by the contrast "from our long, noisy, shuffling, scraping, talking, ridiculous kind of looking assembly, to a neat, square room with eighty or ninety young gentlemen sprucely dressed sitting in chairs or lounging about the fireplace." That the young gentlemen are no longer "sprucely dressed," Mr. Gladstone himself noticed with almost wrathful contempt in his later visits to Oxford. But the broader doctrine that "manners maketh man" has survived the theory that a top hat is a proper adjunct on the river or in the cricket field.

The records of the society, though, unfortunately, they contain no account of the speeches, are of great interest to students of political characters, which may perhaps be divided, like constitutions, under the general heading of rigid and flexible. The future Peelites, Cardwell, Sidney Herbert, and Graham, had already embraced the cause of Free Trade and public economy at the Oxford Union. Doyle prides himself on never having changed his views, and reflects with satisfaction that Robert Lowe afterwards became a convert to the anti-Reform party. So Tait, who succeeded Cardwell as president of the Union in 1833, was already in Gladstone's time developing into a consistent Whig, and took a prominent part in the debates on the side of Reform and Catholic Emancipation. The votes which he gave upon ecclesiastical and political subjects were probably such as he would have approved to the end of his life. At any rate, speaking as Archbishop of Canterbury and as an ex-president of the society in 1873, after reminding the junior men that in his Oxford days it was quite an open question whether or no the poor ought to be taught to read or write lest a formidable weapon should be placed in their hands, and whether the Church could be reformed without being ruined, Tait declared with solemnity: "I am quite prepared, as I was when, as a humble member of this society, I was discussing such questions, to assert that it was a good thing that those changes did take place."

**Political Consistency.**

But the nineteenth century, unlike the eighteenth, has been unfavourable to political consistency. A statesman is no statesman who cannot face new conditions. Leaders exist for the sake of the army; and when the composition of the political army is being constantly changed, when for the government of small sections is substituted, slowly but surely, the self-government of the community, then, in Mr. Gladstone's own words, "it is evident that the statesman, in order to preserve the same amount of consistency as his antecessors in other times, must be gifted with a far larger range of foresight." Few will regard rigidity of juvenile prejudices as a high form of ethical or political consistency; nor can we refuse to


MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF YE OXONIANS. No I.
YE OXFORD UNION- AN HONORABLE MEMBER ADDRESSING YE HOUSE.
CUTHBERT BEDE. B.A. DELT. 1857.
PUBLISHED BY MESSRS. WYATT & SON, 113, HIGH ST. OXFORD.

*(From a Print after the Drawing by "Cuthbert Bede" in the possession of A. S. Rowell, Esq., Oxford.)*

Mr. Gladstone the indulgence which Lord Brabourne* once claimed for the youthful Toryism of Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, of Magdalen College: "I hope that it is no deadly sin to have altered one's views since one was a stripling of nineteen or twenty. Otherwise I must be a grievous sinner; for I find my votes recorded in the Union proceedings in a sense very often diametrically opposed to that in which I would have given them at any time within the last seven and twenty years." He was not, however, in so bad a case as a Christ Church contemporary, who moved "that the administration of justice by stipendiary magistrates, as opposed to country gentlemen, would be highly detrimental to the best interests of the nation," and who afterwards, by the irony of fate, himself became what he had condemned! Mr. Gladstone's subsequent development from the political attitude which he assumed in his undergraduate days will perhaps be intelligible to those who reflect that the electors were behind the times, that their representatives were behind the electorate, and that Oxford was, politically at least, a long way in the rear of Parliament. Some idea of the politics of the society at the time when Mr. Gladstone was elected may be gathered from the voting which took place on an amendment moved by Mr., afterwards Cardinal, Manning on January 28th, 1830. The amendment ran as follows: "That the constitution of Parliamentary representation is possessed of as much power as is consistent with the spirit of our mixed Government;" and in a division there were found to be, Ayes, 73, Noes, 3!

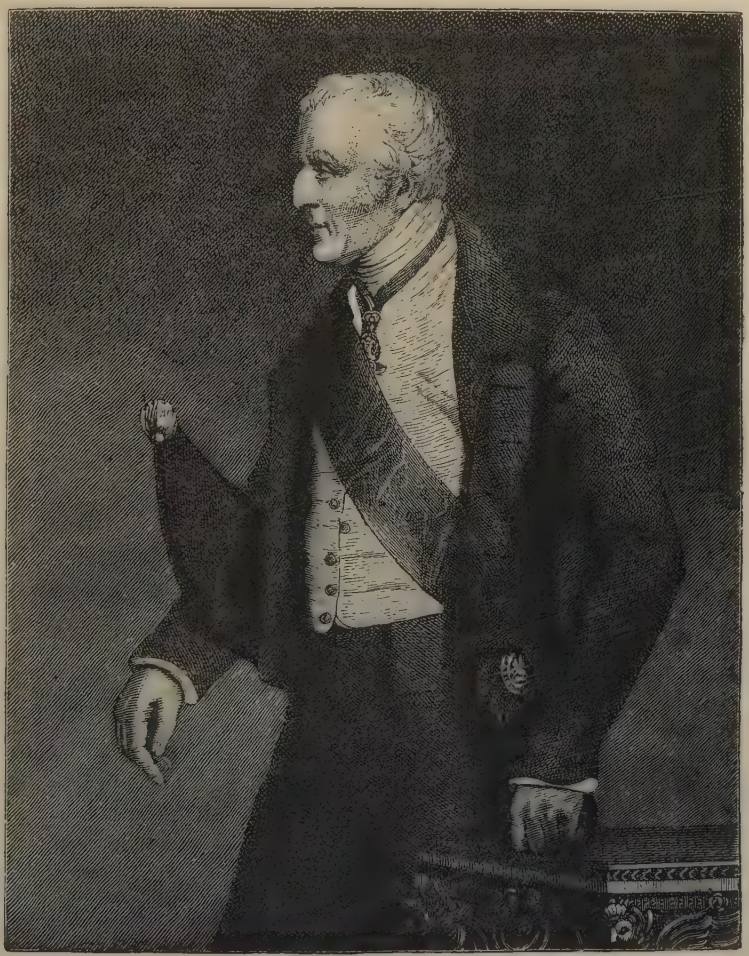
**Mr. Gladstone's First Union Speech.**

On February 11th Mr. Gladstone spoke for the first time, supporting the opposition of Sir John Hanmer, a Tory of the Tories, to a motion "That the conduct of Mr. Fox and his party in reference to the Treason and Sedition Bills which were passed in the year 1795 deserved the admiration and gratitude of their country."

Opposition to Fox was a mere traditional exercise for the young Tory advocate; but an occasion soon arose for a speech upon a subject which appealed to his enthusiasm and imagination. Canning was his political idol; but the debate which ensued might well have suggested to the mind of a less partial advocate some doubts as to the orthodoxy of the great Premier in the year which preceded his death. At any rate, on the 25th February a Balliol undergraduate moved "That Mr. Canning's conduct as a Minister is deserving of the highest commendation." This motion was supported by Milnes Gaskell, of Christ Church. After his speech two unsuccessful attempts at a diversion were made by the Whigs, who saw that the motion would be carried if it were opposed by a direct negative. Accordingly, one of them moved as an amendment "That what we know of the character and policy of Mr. Canning in 1827 justified the highest expectation from his being appointed Prime Minister." This amendment was opposed by Manning, Doyle, and Gladstone. A second amendment was then moved by Harding, of Oriel, "That Mr. Canning's conduct from the time he became Prime Minister is deserving of the highest commendation." But these subtle efforts on the part of the Whigs to separate off the more Liberal days of Canning for the approval of the society failed completely. The first amendment was lost by 65 to 1, and the second by 63 to 5; and the original motion was then carried by a large majority.

* This was before he had gone back to his youthful Toryism.

It should be said that the minutes from which these extracts have been taken are beautifully written out by the secretary, Milnes Gaskell, on a most elaborate system. The important words and figures are printed or underlined. It is evident that this distinguished ex-officer took the greatest pride in his work. The minutes of March 4th are written by Mr. Gladstone and signed; **The Minutes.**



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

(*After the Painting by Count d'Orsay.*)

"W. E. Gladstone, *pro* Milnes Gaskell, secretary." As will be seen from the facsimile on p. 120, Mr. Gladstone's minutes are clearly and carefully entered, though he has not attempted to imitate the artistic work of his predecessor. Their degenerate descendants have availed themselves of the

services of a clerk; and many of them are so careless of the curiosity of posterity that they have not even taken the trouble to append their signatures. On this occasion a resolution moved in all seriousness, and supported by Wilberforce, will serve to illustrate the crude notions which prevailed among these young legislators upon the vulgar and parochial topics of economic and social reform: "That any exertions of the landholders must be useless unless accompanied by a great reduction of taxation and a moderate issue of paper money." The deputy-secretary also records that in private business he carried a motion "that *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review* be taken in," thus successfully imposing upon the society (what most members expect and few get) the gratification of his own special tastes. The three or four meetings which followed are not uninteresting. Having secured his *Theological Quarterly*, Mr. Gladstone opposed, but unsuccessfully, the purchase of James's "Naval History," and so gave what may be taken as his earliest recorded expression of a dislike for war in theory and practice, on land and by sea, which became more and more pronounced as the years went on. This discussion on the "Naval History" took place in Private Business on March 18th, when he again wrote the minutes "*pro* Milnes Gaskell." On the same day it was proposed to discontinue the purchase of the *Age* newspaper—a scurrilous weekly print which gave rise to many heated debates. This highly moral but unpopular suggestion was, according to the deputy-secretary, "supported by Mr. Gladstone"; but Mr. Milnes Gaskell has appended a note by the side: "This gentleman having spoken ag$^{st}$ voted in favour of y$^{e}$ motion." A critic has taken the secretary's sally somewhat seriously as "an early instance of that conscientious readiness to be convinced with which Mr. Gladstone's well-wishers credit him."

Mr. Gladstone's name does not appear in connection with the debate of the week following, when the House refused to admit "that Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham ought to be represented in Parliament." But the motion was opposed by Milnes Gaskell, and there can be no doubt that Gladstone, if he was present, voted with his friends. On May 20th, Gladstone having been elected secretary on the previous week, his own minutes begin, and last until November 11th, when he becomes president.

**Secretary and President.**

Even the Toryism of Milnes Gaskell and Doyle was not strong enough for the newly elected officer, who found it necessary to dissociate himself from his allies when they maintained the revolutionary doctrine "That the civil disabilities of the Jews ought to be removed."

Mr. Gladstone lost his Anglican intolerance comparatively quickly, but it was a long time before his Christian intolerance disappeared. He voted against every stage of a Bill for the removal of Jewish disabilities in his first session in Parliament. He helped to throw out the Municipal Officers' Declaration Bill a few years later; and even in 1841 he was still opposed to Jews holding office in corporations on the same terms as "Quakers, Moravians, and Separatists." Inglis took up the ground of nationality, Gladstone that of religion. A Jew, he argued, ought not to hold office or exercise legislative powers in a Christian country. Long before, in his maiden speech in Parliament, Macaulay had shown the absurdity

**Religious Intolerance.**

and injustice of formally depriving of power the Jew, who, as things stood, might be the richest man in England, might possess the means of raising and depressing parties, might make members of Parliament, and thwart the plans of the greatest princes. The great historian might have pardoned the Union orator. He could not, in 1841, pardon "so great an ornament of the House of Commons." Mr. Gladstone had said that the Jews laboured under no "practical grievance." "That incapacity to hold office," retorted Macaulay, "which among the other nations was made part of the punishment of crime, was, according to the hon. gentleman's singular theory, no ground for complaint, no grievance, no oppression, when put into effect against the Jewish nation. What would the hon. gentleman think if *he* had been declared incapable of office?" But Mr. Gladstone's speech must be reserved for future consideration. It, however, foreshadowed a change in his conception of the religious functions of Parliament, and paved the way for a complete recognition of the political claims of the Jews a few years later. But it must be admitted that in this instance Mr. Gladstone's eyes opened very slowly to the light.

To return to the autumn of 1830: a week or two after his speech on the Jewish question, Mr. Gladstone gave another proof of his unbending Toryism by voting with a minority which opposed the establishment of colleges in London for the education of the middle classes. On the Education question loyalty to an exclusive Church was slowly to give way to a love of liberal culture, which naturally carried with it the desire that its benefits should be as widely extended as possible; and we shall see that his entrance to Parliament was soon followed by activity, at first somewhat circumscribed in its objects and narrow in its conceptions, on behalf of popular education.

We now come to two debates which have a political as well as an academic and personal interest:—

"Thursday, October 28th, 1830 (the Secretary in the Chair). Mr. Gaskell, Ch. Ch., moved:—

"'That the foreign policy of the Duke of Wellington has been derogatory to the dignity and injurious to the best interests of the country.'

SPEAKERS.

| *For the Motion.* | *Against it.* |
|---|---|
| Mr. Vaughan, Ball. | Mr. Harding, Oriel. |
| Mr. Doyle, Ch. Ch. | |
| Mr. Scott, Ch. Ch. | |
| Mr. Wrighton, B.N.C. | |
| Mr. Gladstone, Ch. Ch. | |

Mr. Harding, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Gladstone severally explained. Mr. Gaskell replied. The House then divided, when there appeared:

| | |
|---|---|
| Ayes, | 24 |
| Noes, | 48 |
| Majority, | 24 |

The announcement of the result was received with loud cheering by the majority."

On the 11th November, however, Mr. Gladstone and his party just managed to secure their revenge, as will be seen by reference to the

facsimile below. The debate deserves special notice not only for the distinction which so many of the speakers were destined afterwards to attain, but also for the political significance of this attack by the High Tories upon the Duke. The retirement of Huskisson and the other Canningites in 1828 had led to the formation, under the Duke of Wellington, of a purely Tory administration. Greville tells of "the extravagant and unconcealed joy of the High Tories," and how when the Duke attended the Pitt dinner at the end of May Lord Eldon gave his famous "one cheer more"

**Attack on the Duke of Wellington.**

Thursday Nov. 11. 1830.

(The President in the Chair.)

The Secretary moved "That the administration of the Duke of Wellington is undeserving of the confidence of the country."

Speakers.

| For the motion. | Against it. |
|---|---|
| The Secretary. | Hon. S. Herbert Oriel |
| Mr Doyle. Ch. Ch. | Marquess of Abercorn, Ch. Ch. |
| The President. | |
| Mr Knatchbull, Trin | |
| Mr Lyall, Ball. | |
| Earl of Lincoln, Ch. Ch | |

The Secretary replied

The House then divided, when the President announced that the motion was carried by a majority of one. (Tremendous Cheering.)

The President then stated that the numbers were.

For the motion . . . 57
Against it . . . . 56 (Repeated Cheers.)

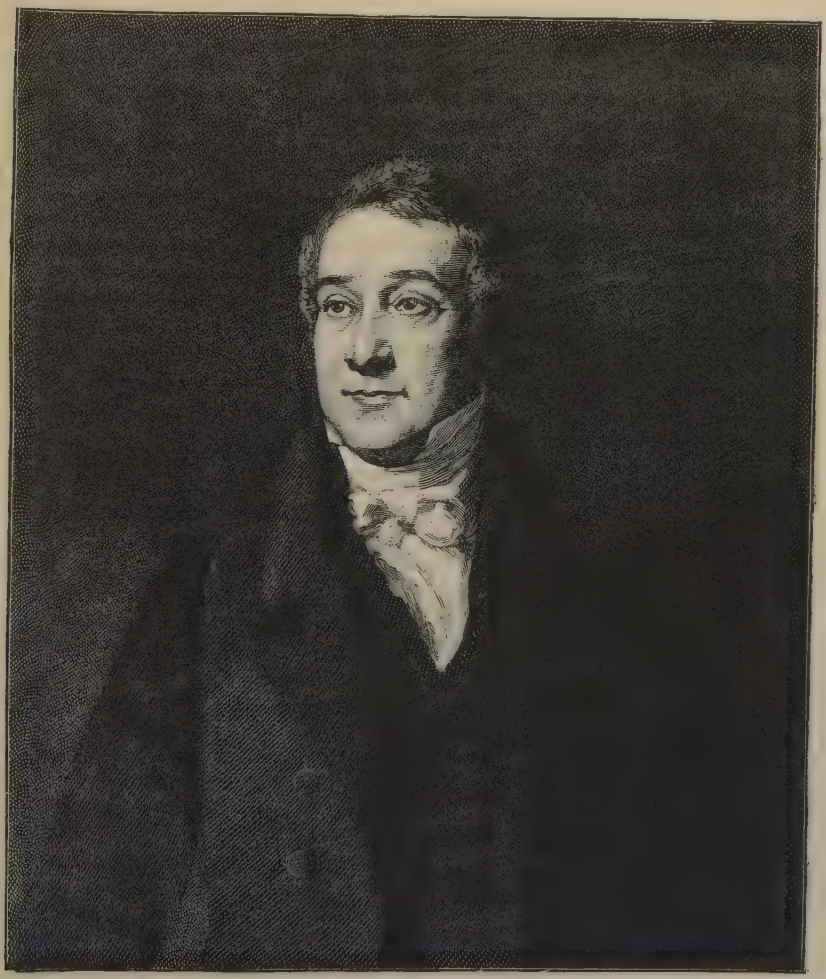
Adjourned at a quarter past eleven

W E. Gladstone
Secretary

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF ENTRY IN THE MINUTE BOOK OF THE OXFORD UNION.

for the Protestant ascendancy. But the agitation in Ireland began to alarm Peel, who on the 11th of August, 1828, wrote his confidential letter to the Duke advising Catholic Emancipation. But so late as the 25th of November Greville speaks of "Peel and the rest of the violent anti-

Catholics"; and not until the 4th of February, 1829, did it transpire that "Orange Peel" had "deserted" Protestantism and persuaded the Cabinet. Then the old Tories were dreadfully dejected. The conduct of Peel was described by Lord Winchilsea as a "gross violation of political rectitude



WILLIAM HUSKISSON.
(*From the Painting by John Graham.*)

and consistency." The traitor decorously resigned his seat for Oxford, and was induced to stand for re-election. But the Protestant parsons flocked up to vote against Rome and "St. Peel"; and even Newman, then tutor of Oriel, though he professed to agree with the principle of the Bill, was scandalised at the opportunism of the Ministry. The Tory leaders "had lost their characters by their conduct" was Greville's sententious reflection;

and the motion which Mr. Gladstone carried in the Union reflected a feeling of disgust among squires and parsons which was of most happy augury for the cause of Reform.

In connection with Mr. Gladstone's minutes of this debate a curious little discovery has been made. It had frequently been noticed that after "majority of *one* (Tremendous cheering)" several words, which Mr. Gladstone must have written, had been scratched out, and it was only possible to guess that they contained some expression which was thought too jubilant for a secretary to use who was recording so narrow a victory for his own party. But after the page had been photographed for the purpose of reproduction in these pages, the Steward of the Union, holding up the negative to the light, discovered at once that the words lost for sixty years had been recovered. Mr. Gladstone wrote, "Tremendous cheering from the majority of one." Afterwards, when the minutes came up for confirmation, his loquacity may have been curtailed by the vote of the society; but more probably an entry of December 2nd, when Gladstone was president, provides the true explanation. We read that during private business "the President took the opportunity of condemning the practice, which some honourable gentleman had lately adopted, of defacing the records of the society." One may conjecture that Mr. Gladstone was still smarting under the remembrance of the surreptitious obliteration of those precious words in which he had done justice to the majority of one.

**An Erasure.**

The keenness of Oxford Union politics at this time was no doubt mainly due to the brilliant and enthusiastic speeches of the Christ Church undergraduate; it may be illustrated by one of his entries in the Minute Book. "It was unanimously agreed," he writes, in recording the proceedings of the committee on October 28th, "to furnish the following pamphlets for the use of the Reading Room:—1. 'The Country without a Government.' 2. 'What has the Duke of Wellington gained by the Dissolution?' 3. 'The Duke of Wellington and the Whigs.' 4. 'Government without Whigs.' 5. 'The Result of the General Election.' 6. 'Observations on Two Pamphlets attributed to Mr. Brougham.' 7. 'Reply to "What has the Duke," etc.' 8. 'Cuthbert Rippon's Letter to the King.'"

Another purchase is of more interest to the biographer, because it suggests that Mr. Gladstone was already contemplating a problem which probably occupied his attention more continuously than any other in the course of his long life. On June 3rd, in private business, he supported a motion "That Coleridge on the connection between Church and State be purchased." This was the book that first attracted his attention to ecclesiastical polity. Some years later, when, as editor of the *British Critic*, Newman asked Hope-Scott to review Mr. Gladstone's "Church and State," Hope-Scott replied (March 1st, 1839): "What with weaker health than I could wish, and more occupations than I ought to have undertaken, I fear that it would be impossible for me to provide you with such a review of Gladstone as I might, with greater strength and more leisure, have been capable of. Still, however, I adhere to my willingness to give any assistance in my power to any other person who may undertake it. No one, I think, should do so without having read

Coleridge's "Church and State"—a work which has evidently had a great deal to do with Gladstone's fundamental ideas of the subject, and to which I am disposed to impute at least one of his views from which I dissent."

On November 18th, 1830, Gladstone took the chair for the first time, J. E. Lyall, of Balliol, afterwards Advocate-General of Bengal, succeeding him as secretary. The motion chosen for debate was "That Free Trade is essential to the prosperity of the country," so that Mr. Gladstone was presiding over a debate on the very subject which fifteen years later served him as a stepping-stone from Toryism to Peelism.

A Free Trade Debate.

Mr. Gladstone himself, in a letter to the *Gloucestershire Standard*, written on January 9th, 1880, described himself as a supporter of Huskisson's Free Trade policy even before he came up to Oxford. An import duty of 30 per cent. on French goods had just been substituted for absolute prohibition, "and it is in my recollection," wrote Mr. Gladstone, "that there was a keener detestation of Mr. Huskisson, and a more violent passion roused against him, in consequence of that mild, initial measure, than ever was associated in the Protectionists' camp with the career of Cobden and Bright." As was mentioned in Chapter I., he had been taken to see over a silk manufactory in Macclesfield, "and they produced the English silk handkerchief which they were in the habit of making, and which they thought it so cruel to be competed with by the silk handkerchiefs of France . . . . and what I thought when they showed me those handkerchiefs was, How detestable they really are, and what in the world can be the object of the policy of coaxing, nursing, coddling up manufactures to produce goods such as those, which you ought to be ashamed of exhibiting?"

EARLY PORTRAIT OF J. H. NEWMAN.
*(From a Sketch by R. Doyle.)*

We do not, however, know anything of his opinions upon the question at Oxford; and he certainly did not for a long time draw out his Free Trade principles to their legitimate conclusions with the logical rigour which he applied in reasoning from his ecclesiastical premises. But the repeal of the Corn Laws was not allowed to be on the same plane as the reduction or abolition of minor duties; and more than a decade elapsed before Sir Robert Peel began to educate himself and the less unenlightened of his followers out of the belief that the British Constitution must stand or fall with a law which starved the people in the problematic interests of the landed proprietors.

Meanwhile the Union Society could not always pursue the even tenor of its way. At the next meeting "the proctor, Mr. Churton, entered the

House and requested the society to disperse immediately, in consequence of the disturbed state of the city; whereupon the President adjourned the Society until three o'clock on the following day, when it again met and resumed the debate."

ROUNDELL PALMER.
(*From the Portrait by G. Richmond, R.A.*)

The increase in the membership of the club, and in the attendance at the debates, during the Gladstonian era is remarkable. The influence of Eton and Christ Church was predominant; but it was the predominance of superior talent, like that of the Wykehamists in the period which succeeded. One of the earliest presidents, Dr. Durnford, the late Bishop of Chichester, once rightly claimed to have helped to lay the foundation wisely and well:—

**Predominance of Eton and Christ Church.**

"There was then great separation between colleges, there were many jealousies, there was much exclusiveness. But no man properly qualified, so far as I know, in those early days was rejected when he aspired to the dignity of president, even though he did not belong to the larger and more influential colleges."

F. D. Maurice of Exeter spoke once during Mr. Gladstone's presidency, but his interests belonged rather to the smaller circle of the "Weg." The following extract from a letter to the present writer from an old friend and contemporary of Mr. Gladstone is of general interest:

**"The Weg."**

"There was an Essay Society at Oxford before we took our degrees, of which Gladstone was an important member. As regards W. E. G., the point of interest to me at Oxford was that he introduced to the Essay Society Mr. Maurice, one of whose sisters had been a governess in his family. Maurice was a new power among us, and my most influential friend all his life—I mean as to thought and religion, not politics. He made S. T. C. my Pope. I think Gladstone thought Coleridge too vague. My chief friends were Maurice, Bruce, Harrison, afterwards archdeacon, and some young Fellows of Oriel, Balliol, and Exeter."

Maurice had not come up in a very genial state of mind, for he wrote in December, 1829, of "the mere barren orthodoxy which, from all I can hear, is characteristic of Oxford."

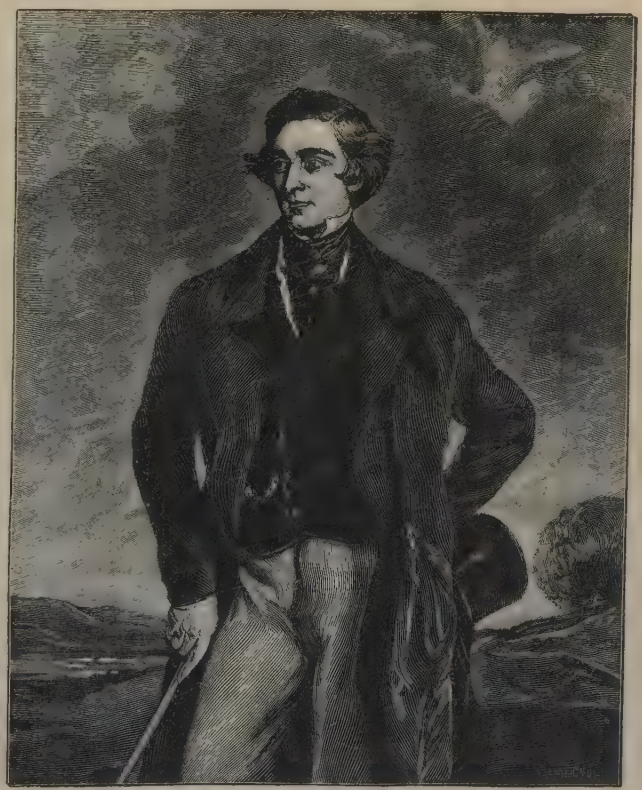
On February 3rd, 1831, Gladstone and Roundell Palmer supported a motion "That the *Westminster Review* be discontinued," an amazing proposal which was carried by a majority of six, in spite of the

opposition of the president (Bruce), two Aclands, and Doyle. A few months later Gladstone frustrated an attempt by Lowe to induce the society once more to take in this organ of the philosophic Radicals (April 21st). And the society did not begin to subscribe again for the *Review* until the following year. **The Westminster Review.**

On February 16th Tait, Gaskell, and Gladstone opposed a motion "that the Catholic Relief Bill has not by its results justified the expectations which were held out by its supporters." But as we have no record of his speech or of the arguments which were used, it is by no means certain that Gladstone adopted a Liberal attitude on this occasion. It was in this month that Peel was thrown out on standing for re-election at Oxford. Gladstone appears to have taken no part in the contest. In all probability he followed the lead of Newman, then tutor of Oriel, and one of the most influential Churchmen, who agreed with the principle of Emancipation, but objected to Peel's sudden conversion as an act of discourtesy to the University which he represented. It is curious that a University which zealously opposed every Reform movement should have insisted on its own member being a democratic delegate, whose opinions and votes should be a mere reflection of the narrow and reactionary spirit of his constituents. **Catholic Relief.**

On the day of the Catholic debate Robert Lowe, of University College, was elected a member of the society. He may not have been present, however, though his statement in a "Chapter of Autobiography" that the first speech which he heard Gladstone make was in the following June is obviously incorrect.

Meanwhile the long agitation for Reform had at length received official recognition. It was a Whig Parliament



SIDNEY HERBERT.
*(From the Portrait by Sir F. Grant, P.R.A.)*

which met in October, 1830. This circumstance, however, did not at once force itself upon the attention of the Duke of Wellington, whose speech in the debate upon the address of November 2nd contains a political declaration as remarkable, considering the conditions, as any ever delivered by a military expert. "He was fully convinced," he said, "that the country possessed at the present moment a Legislature which answered all the good purposes of legislation, and this to a greater degree than any Legislature ever had answered in any country whatever." He would go further and say that it possessed "the full and entire confidence" of the country, because "it contained a large body of the property of the country" and was under "the preponderating influence" of the landed interests. Within a fortnight Earl Grey was in office at the head of a Whig Government pledged to Parliamentary Reform. A committee was appointed, and on March 1st, 1831, Lord John Russell introduced the first Reform Bill, by which sixty rotten boroughs were to be wholly, and forty-six partially, disfranchised. At a meeting of the Union two days afterwards, Sidney Herbert moved "That a reform in the system of Parliamentary Representation will ultimately prove destructive of the constitution and consequently of the prosperity of this country." The motion was carried by 80 votes to 56. Roundell Palmer, who went one better than the Duke of Wellington, said he should oppose the motion "on Tory principles," as he considered that a reform which had for its object the raising and not the extension of the elective franchise would be a highly desirable measure. Social reform, however, was more popular; for shortly afterwards, at a debate in which Palmer and Lowe took part, Massie of Wadham, the first Radical president of the society, succeeded in carrying a rider "That the abuse of the Poor Laws is the cause of great distress among the labouring classes."

Parliamentary Reform.

On April 28th no one could be found who was sufficiently advanced to condemn the conduct of the Manchester magistrates in 1819. However, the spirit of party bigotry which had ejected the *Westminster Review* received a check in private business. Lyall moved "that it is no longer consistent with the principles of the Union Society to take in Cobbett's *Register*, and that it be discontinued accordingly." Gladstone and Lowe both spoke—no doubt on opposite sides—and the Liberals managed to retain the *Register* by the narrow majority of six.

On May 5th Palmer* of Magdalen actually proposed that the whole funds of the society at that time in the hands of the treasurer be subscribed to promote the return of anti-Reform members to Parliament. The society met, as has been said, in Wyatt's rooms in the High Street; and it is hardly surprising that in so exposed a situation the president found it necessary to postpone its next meeting "owing to the disturbed state of the town," especially as the subject for debate was "that the present Ministry is incompetent to carry on the government of the country." This most famous debate in the annals of the society began on Monday, May 16th, 1831, when Palmer of Magdalen, Doyle, and Sidney Herbert were opposed by Lowe, Massie and Tait. Doyle describes an incident of the first night in so vivid and charming a manner that two

* A cousin of Roundell Palmer.

trifling inaccuracies deserve to pass unnoticed, or at least uncensured:—"For a certain number of Thursdays, the day when our debates were held, I had watched, affectionately and respectfully, an old gentleman with snow white hair, who seemed to have become a regular attendant. . . . I therefore pictured to myself that this unknown personage was an enthusiastic veteran *donatus jam rude*, who sat watching the rising generation, to see if a flash of lightning here and there were visible among us. Week after week I kept saying to myself, There is that dear old boy again. How nice of him to come and investigate for himself what we are worth! I wish I knew who he is." On that first evening of the Reform debate the long desired information was vouchsafed. "Some earnest young Tory had denounced Lord Grey and his colleagues as a vile *crew* of traitors. He had hardly finished when up jumped my patriarch (it was the summer term, with the boat races in full force), and in a bold and vigorous tone of voice took him to task thus:—'The honourable gentleman has called his Majesty's Ministers a crew. We accept the omen, a crew they are; and with Lord Grey for stroke, Lord Brougham for cox,* and the whole people of England hallooing on the banks, I can tell the honourable gentleman they are pretty sure of winning the race.'" Even those who remember the brilliant speeches in which "Bob Lowe" opposed the Reform Bills of 1866 and 1867 will agree that this undergraduate sally was not unworthy of his later reputation. "Down he sat," continues Doyle, "loudly and deservedly applauded. But I—I fell into a state of bewilderment that passes description. I thought my respected Methuselah had suddenly gone mad. On recovering myself, however, I made inquiries, and soon discovered that I had been revering as an ancient sage the famous white-headed boy, Bob Lowe, now flourishing as Lord Sherbrooke." This is the first of a series of excellent Oxford stories which nature, powerfully assisted by ingenuity and imagination, has been able to produce by the combination of white hair and short sight.

Robert Lowe.

The meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, when Roundell Palmer reopened the debate for the Tories, and was backed by the Earl of Lincoln. Lincoln's oratorical support was of little value, however, if we may accept the verdict of Palmer, then Lord Selborne, given in 1873, upon "the late" Duke of Newcastle: "certainly the worst speaker I ever remember in the society, and therefore the best example of the good the society does; for he lived to be a good and useful speaker." It will be seen later that Lincoln, though himself no speaker, could appreciate the gift in others.

Milnes Gaskell, who had been gradually veering round from the High Toryism of Gladstone, spoke for the opposition. Then Gladstone rose. Wishing, as he afterwards said, to express his views more forcibly than in the words of the motion, and perhaps dissatisfied with the conciseness and economy of its diction, he moved the following rider:—

"That the Ministry has unwisely introduced, and most unscrupulously forwarded a measure which threatens not only to change the form of our Government, but ultimately to break up the very foundations of social order, as well as materially to forward the views of those who are pursuing this project throughout the civilised world."

* Doyle gives "steerer," which is weak, but may be right, as "cox" is very modern.

It was now nearly half-past eleven; and as the orators were not yet satiated, the debate was adjourned till Thursday, May 19th, when the division at last took place, after speeches by Bruce (Lord Elgin), Lyall, and others: for the motion and rider, 94; against, 38; majority, 56.

By the unanimous consent of all contemporaries, whether friendly, indifferent, or hostile, Mr. Gladstone was easily pre-eminent among the brilliant speakers who then adorned the Oxford Union Society. "As

*Photo: C. C. Cole, Oxford.*

LIBRARY OF THE OXFORD UNION SOCIETY, FORMERLY THE DEBATING HALL.

soon as he dawned on the Union he took the first place." Said another, who attained the Lord Chancellorship: "In those days to which men of my generation look back, there was one pre-eminent above all—a man who seemed even then to promise to be equal to the greatest men who ever adorned the senate with their eloquence—a man not behind Pitt or Canning, and that man was Mr. Gladstone; . . . and when I look back to what he was as a member and president of this society, I rejoice to know that we all foresaw in him the greatness which he has since achieved." And if the superiority of Mr. Gladstone to other speakers was admitted, the first place among his speeches was accorded with equal unanimity to this triumphant onslaught upon the cause of Reform. "The great oratorical event of my time," says Doyle.

**Mr. Gladstone's Place in the Union.**

"was Mr. Gladstone's speech against the first Reform Bill; I may add that the debate as a whole, being the outgrowth of a genuine passion, and an excitement shared by all, was better than the average. Most of the speakers rose more or less above their ordinary level, but when Mr. Gladstone sat down, we all of us felt that an epoch in our lives had occurred." He goes on to say, "it certainly was the finest speech of his I ever heard," a remarkable testimony to Mr. Gladstone's early oratory, even when Doyle adds the qualification that he never heard him at his best.

His Finest Speech.

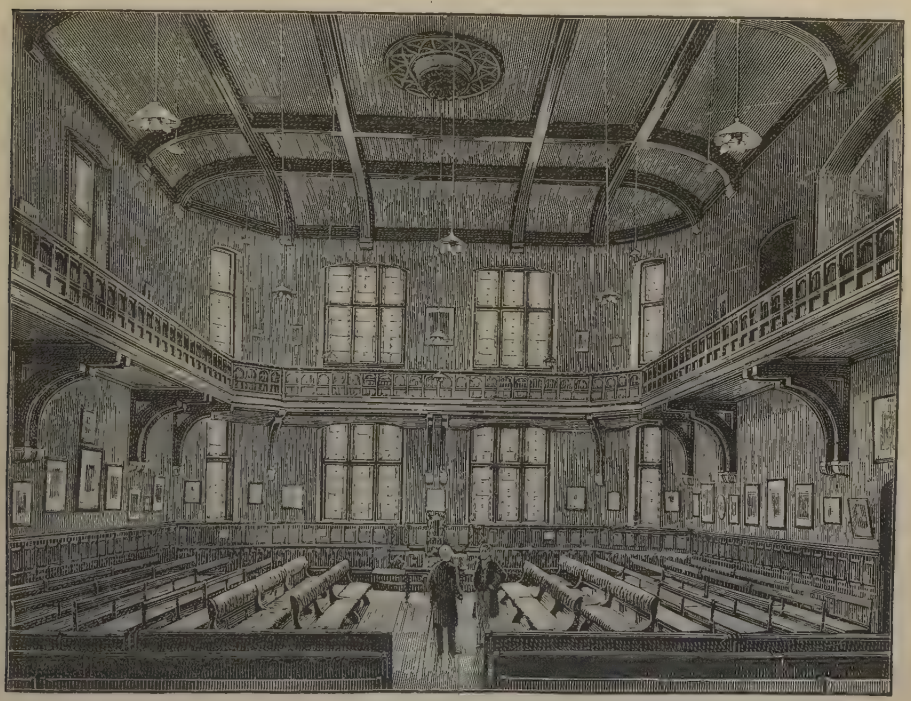


*Photo: C. C. Cole, Oxford.*

PRESENT DEBATING HALL OF THE OXFORD UNION SOCIETY.

To the same writer we owe one brief but delightful reminiscence of the speech itself:—

"In the debate on the first Reform Bill (at the Union), Mr. Gladstone attacked the Whigs for their administrative incapacity. At that period he was not much disposed to make much allowance for Liberal weaknesses and vacillations. He therefore enumerated a lot of trumpery failures in succession, always driving the imputation home with this galling question—'If they cannot say the ——, the whole ——, and nothing but the ——, how dare they thrust upon the people of England, as if it were a chapter out of their infallible Whig Khoran, the Bill, the whole Bill—and nothing but the Bill?' One of these reiterated formulas was the barilla duty, the whole barilla duty, and nothing but the barilla duty—in the fixing of which some hitch, I suppose, had taken place. Stephen Denison, then a young undergraduate of Balliol and one of Manning's

most devoted vassals, puzzled himself—and small blame to him—over this expression, new and strange to a boy. Accordingly, in all humbleness, he sought out his pope, and asked him for an explanation of the unknown word. 'Dear me,' replied Manning (this at least is the tradition), 'not know what "barilla" means: I will explain it to you at once. You see, in commerce there are two methods of proceeding. At one time you load your ship with a particular commodity such as tea, wine, or tobacco; at other times you select a variety of articles suitable for the port of destination, and in the language of trade we denominate this latter operation barilla.'"

There is no harm in completing the story or legend, especially in view of an unfortunate remark which Cardinal Manning once dropped to his biographer: "Mr. Gladstone's geese are all swans." After this instruction, Stephen Denison went his way impressed more profoundly than ever by the intellectual greatness of his pope; "but in a week or so he found that barilla meant burnt seaweed, or its equivalent, and his faith in Manning's infallibility was no longer the same." It would be impertinent to assert that Denison's swan turned out to be a goose; but certainly the explanation and the remark, even though the one were a mere joke, and the other partially true, indicate a certain deficiency in Manning's conception of the duties of both patron and friend. It may be doubted whether Manning, the keenest of politicians, could ever quite forgive Gladstone for superseding and eclipsing him at the Union. Nevertheless we have it on Mr. Gladstone's authority that no one else was so intimate with Manning in his Anglican days. But their friendship was on a narrow basis. In 1851, "on Manning becoming a Roman Catholic, our friendship died a natural death, for outside of the Anglican Church and its concerns we had no ideas or interests in common."

**Gladstone and Manning.**

Mr. Doyle, like Archbishop Tait, never changed his opinions. The Union condemned her Majesty's Ministers by a large majority, in spite of Lowe's omen; "and I for one, if the thing were to be done over again, should vote against them now with as much zeal as Mr. Gladstone and I voted against them then, and I should expect Lord Sherbrooke to vote with me instead of with Mr. Gladstone, seeing that he has grown wiser as well as older." But the majority of his countrymen will not regret that Mr. Gladstone did not keep his eyes closed to the light, or having opened them, did not close them again. The minority may chuckle, if they can, over Mr. Disraeli's speech in the House of Commons on the Reform Bill of 1866, when he taunted his great rival with his rider—quoting it incorrectly—in the Oxford Union debate:—

**Disraeli's Taunt.**

"The other day I was looking over the records of a celebrated Assembly—I will not say as celebrated as the House of Commons, though unquestionably men as illustrious as any that ever figured in the House of Commons belonged to it—and the period was one similar to the present. The time was when the great Reform Bill was introduced in 1831. The country then was greatly agitated. On the 16th May, 1831, at Wyatt's rooms—I am sure hon. members opposite will remember Wyatt's rooms and the Oxford Union—the Parliamentary Reform Bill was before the Union, and an ardent member, Mr. Knatchbull, moved the following resolution with regard to it: 'That the present Ministry is incompetent to carry on the government of the country.' It was supported—one remembers it almost with a sigh—by Mr. Sidney Herbert, and the debate was adjourned. But there was a member of the Union who was not satisfied with the bold expression of opinion of Mr. Knatchbull, and who next day moved a rider to the resolution, and that rider was in these terms:—

"'That the Ministry has unwisely introduced and most unscrupulously forwarded a

measure which threatens not only to change the form of our government, but ultimately to break up the very foundations of social order, as well as materially to forward the views of those who press these projects throughout the civilised world.'

I shall be perfectly willing to take that amendment instead of the one now moved by the noble lord. The amendment as I have read it was moved by Mr. William Gladstone of Christ Church ['Oh, Oh']. The utterances of hon. Members prove what I say—how difficult it is to devise an amendment that will please everybody."

But the score was purchased dearly; for on the next day (April 28th, 1866), in a speech which justly ranks among the noblest specimens of British oratory, Mr. Gladstone dealt as follows with this belated charge of political inconsistency:—

**The Reply.**

"The right hon. gentleman, secure, I suppose, in the recollection of his own consistency, has taunted me with the political errors of my boyhood. When he addressed the hon. member for Westminster, he showed his magnanimity by declaring that he would not take the philosopher to task for what he wrote twenty-five years ago; but when he caught one who, thirty-six years ago, just emerged from boyhood, and still an undergraduate at Oxford, had expressed an opinion, adverse to the Reform Bill of 1832, of which he has so long and bitterly repented, then the right hon. gentleman could not resist the temptation that offered itself to his appetite for effect. He, a Parliamentary champion of twenty years' standing, and the leader, as he informs us to-night, of the Tory party, is so ignorant of the House of Commons, or so simple in the structure of his mind, that he positively thought he would obtain a Parliamentary advantage by exhibiting me as an opponent of the Reform Bill of 1832. As the right hon. gentleman has exhibited me, let me exhibit myself. What he has stated is true. I deeply regret it; but I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning: every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth. With Canning I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, and in the character which he gave to our policy abroad; with Canning I rejoiced in the opening which he made towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations; with Canning, and under the shadow of that great name, and under the shadow of that yet more venerable name of Burke, I grant, my youthful mind and imagination were impressed with the same idle and futile fears which still bewilder and distract the mature mind of the right hon. gentleman. I had conceived that fear and alarm of the first Reform Bill in the days of my undergraduate career at Oxford which the right hon. gentleman now feels; and the only difference between us is this—I thank him for bringing it out—that, having those views, I moved the Oxford Union Debating Society to express them clearly, plainly, forcibly, in downright English, while the right hon. gentleman does not dare to tell the nation what it is that he really thinks, and is content to skulk under the shelter of the meaningless amendment which is proposed by the noble lord. And now, Sir, I quit the right hon. gentleman. I leave him to his reflections, and I envy him not one particle of the polemical advantage which he has gained by his discreet reference to the proceedings of the Oxford Union Debating Society in the year of grace 1831."

Charles Wordsworth, writing to his brother Christopher on the 24th April, 1831, after speaking of Gladstone's speech as "the most splendid out and out that was ever heard in our Society," assures him that "the Oxford Union will yet save the country"—a prophecy which was not to be fulfilled immediately, or in the sense in which it was uttered. Wordsworth could not conceive speeches "more eloquent or more powerful in argument than both Bruce's and Gladstone's. The other side," he added very unfairly, "possess no aristocracy either of rank or talent." Mr. Gladstone, in a letter to the *Standard*, signed "Alumnus," in which he gave an account of the debate, took the same line, but avoided discourtesy to his opponents in a characteristic sentence: "Your readers will perhaps be pleased, though not surprised, to learn that in so far at least as Oxford

is concerned the rising generation promise in no degree to fall short of their seniors. The division was striking enough, but the proportion of persons distinguished in the University was even greater than the figures indicated." The last portion of this letter is interesting because Mr. Gladstone anticipates as it were and provides a possible answer to the criticism which he levelled at his youthful prejudices in the speech of 1866, which we have just quoted. The Union Society, he argues, is not more illiberal than the University. But as that might possibly be deemed faint praise, he proceeds:—

Universities and Political Questions.

"It is doubtless true that there are many in the present day who conceive, and assume as an indisputable truth, that the members of our Universities are neither competent to form, nor entitled to pronounce, any opinion on any political question. Still there are others who conceive the circumstances under which our youth are educated here, by no means such as to impose this total disqualification. If on the one hand, they are denounced as expectant and reversionary corruptionists, on the other hand it may [be] observed that their period of life, warmth of feeling, and want of experience render them peculiarly liable to be led away by those seductive and fascinating phantoms which have lately been presented with such fatal effect to the view of the English populace. The very spirit of opposition to authority might perhaps be deemed, by an impartial person, a consideration proving them rather liable to err against than for existing institutions. As far as their studies, and the effect produced by them on their mind, are concerned, I know not whether the stimulating food of the daily press, which forms the ordinary diet of reformers, be more sound or more wholesome aliment than that study of philosophic history, and that rigorous adherence and attention to principles, for which Oxford has long been, and is at this moment, so peculiarly and so honourably distinguished. Long may their studies flourish and these results continue to issue from them!"

Sir Francis Doyle describes Mr. Gladstone's reply to Disraeli as "an apology for having been unfortunately too well educated." A truer, if less epigrammatic, account will be found in Mr. Gladstone's own "Chapter of Autobiography." It was surely no slight to academic learning, no disparagement of Aristotle and Thucydides, of Burke and Canning, to rejoice at having escaped, as they escaped, and as every great man must escape, from the tyranny of dogmas whose acceptance forms a necessary part of the prelude to life, as their rejection or modification is essential to its perfect development. To insist on a rigorous political consistency is to insist on political stagnation. We may deplore "the relative deficiency in foresight" shown by Sir Robert Peel in reference to Emancipation, Reform, and Corn Law Repeal, we may pity the contortions of the trimmer and scowl upon the easy maxims of the opportunist; but the student of politics and the critic of statesmen will abandon "the hopeless attempt to stereotype the minds of men and fasten on their manhood the swaddling clothes of their infancy."

But in the summer of 1831 Mr. Gladstone was still in the straitest sect of Toryism, and the fame of his speech soon spread abroad. It was told how a young Whig named Alston had been so impressed that he crossed the floor of the House, and actually spoke in favour of the rider on the third day of the debate. The effect produced by the speech was reported at Clumber by Lord Lincoln, with the result that a year later Mr. Gladstone became the "carefully selected nominee" of the bigoted old Duke of Newcastle.

*Photo: Gillman and Co., Oxford.*

OXFORD UNION SOCIETY'S ROOMS, SHOWING THE PRESENT DEBATING HALL (ON THE RIGHT) AND THE LIBRARY (IN THE MIDDLE).

The last debate in which Mr. Gladstone took part, of a society from which he had received only less distinction than he had conferred, turned upon the question of Negro Emancipation. On the 2nd of June, 1831, it was moved "That while all due precaution consistent with such a measure should be taken, the negroes in the West Indies should be emancipated without delay." Mr. Gladstone submitted an amendment which, considering that his father was a slave-owner, must be regarded as moderate and even liberal:—

Mr. Gladstone's Last Union Debate.

"That legislative enactments ought to be made, and, if it be necessary, enforced—(1) For better guarding the personal and civil rights of the negroes in our West India Colonies. (2) For the establishing of compulsory manumission. (3) For securing universally the receiving a Christian education, under the clergy and teachers, independent of the planters; a measure of which total but gradual emancipation will be the natural consequence, as it was of a similar procedure in the first ages of Christianity."

Gladstone's speech is alluded to by Robert Lowe in his "Chapter of Autobiography":—

"As far as mere elocution went, he spoke as well as he does now in 1876. He had taken just as much pains with the details of his subject as he would have if he had been Secretary of State for the Colonies. He did not launch into commonplaces about the rights of man, but he proposed a well-considered and carefully-prepared scheme of gradual emancipation."

The last political act of Mr. Gladstone's undergraduate career at Oxford was the drafting of a petition to the House of Commons against the Reform Bill, of which notice has been taken in the preceding chapter. The petition was presented on the 1st of July, 1831. On the 6th the Second Reform Bill passed its second reading in the new House of Commons by a majority of 136. The young gentlemen had done their best to stem the flowing tide. They had pulverised the Reformers in Wyatt's rooms. But the Reformers had risen from the dust, and were now having it all their own way in the country and in the House of Commons.

F. W. HIRST.

LIBRARY POF

# CHAPTER III.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS A SCHOLAR.

Decay of Classical Taste in Parliament—Influence of Canning—At Eton and Oxford—Appointed an Examiner at Eton—Collaboration with Lord Lyttelton—Homeric Studies—An Opponent of "Separatism"—"The Slicing of Hector"—Homer's Moral Teaching—Mr. Gladstone's Interpretation of Homer—An Advocate of Classical Studies—His Seriousness as a Classical Scholar—Mr. Punch's Banter—The Hellenic Element in Civilisation—Attitude towards the Universities—Oxford and Cambridge as a Nursery for Statesmen—Studies in Italian Literature: Dante and Leopardi—Translating Horace.

THE innate conservatism which, as his biographers tell us, and as indeed any observer who can look deeper than political shibboleths extend may see for himself, was an essential characteristic of Mr. Gladstone's mental constitution, is nowhere more apparent than in his attitude towards literary and more especially classical studies. It was nearly twenty years before his death that a well-known political journalist, writing of him, used these words:—

"Mr. Gladstone is described as 'a statesman and man of letters.' All the world recognises him as the first, and he has a very fair claim to be considered the second. In a real, though perhaps not very broad sense of the word, Mr. Gladstone is a man of letters, and within the limits he has chosen, his devotion to literature is intense. Within the circle of humane letters, perhaps poetry has had the greatest charms for him, and Homer above all other poets."

This is true so far as it goes; but Homer by no means exhausts the field of Mr. Gladstone's literary interests. The number of Englishmen who have a more minute knowledge of Dante than he had might probably be counted on the fingers; nor indeed was any period of Italian literature unfamiliar to him. With Virgil and with Horace he had the intimate and affectionate acquaintance befitting an old Etonian; and it was but a little while before his death that he signalised his final release from more than sixty years of political labour by publishing a translation of Horace's *Odes*, an exercise perhaps more in favour in his younger days than in these. Any account of Mr. Gladstone's career which should fail to consider this side of his activity would indeed be hopelessly incomplete.

**Decay of Classical Taste.**

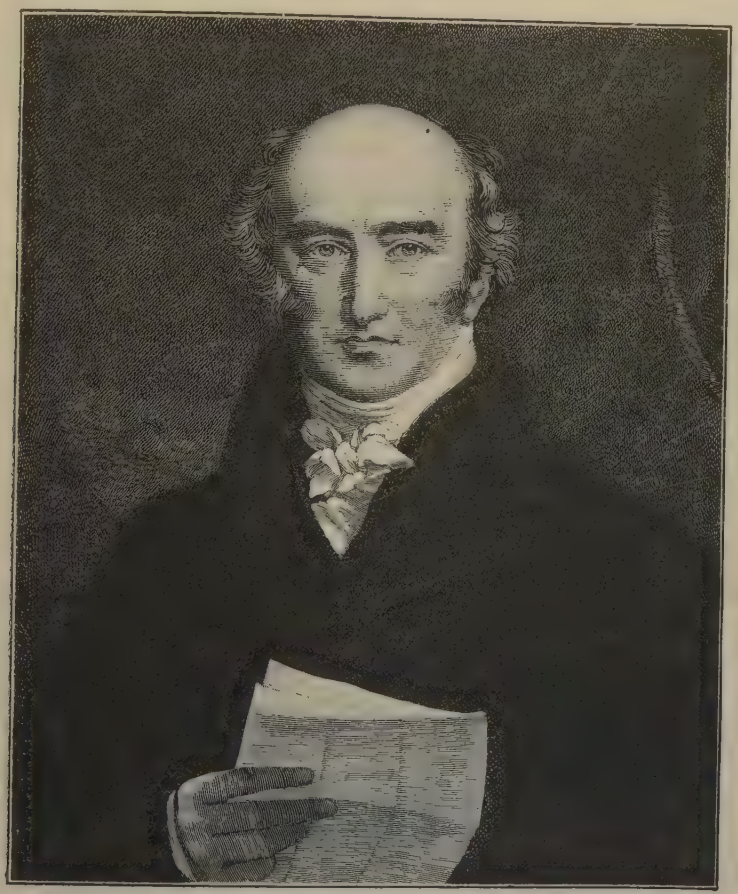
Of course, the fashion of the day is to regard the classics as at best useful exercises for such young people as have a bent that way; they are no longer held, as they were even fifty years ago, to be the essential part of all higher education, still less as an accomplishment which every cultivated gentleman must possess, and which those who did not possess it might at least be expected to respect and admire. Even up to a generation ago, it was quite usual for leading statesmen to occupy their leisure in classical translations and cultivated exercises of a similar kind. Lord Derby, the "Rupert of debate," and a sportsman in Parliament and outside it, translated the "Iliad" into verse, and was capable, as all who heard

him admit the Prince of Wales to a degree at Oxford in 1863 will allow, of beautiful Latinity. Lord Carnarvon translated part of the "Odyssey," as well as the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, with the approval of good scholars. People still far from old age can remember the time when no great speech in Parliament was complete without a Latin quotation or two; indeed, it may be suspected that a dexterously applied line of Virgil or Horace now and again has had its effect upon the fate of a measure. Everyone has heard the anecdote of a somewhat earlier day, how a Minister quoting Horace was corrected by one of the Opposition; how the former betted a guinea that his version was correct; how the question was then and there referred to the Speaker; and how, on his decision being given against the Minister, that gentleman tossed a guinea across the floor of the house to his opponent, who, as he pocketed it, observed that it was the first money he had ever received from the Treasury bench. Sir W. Young is not known to fame either as a scholar or as a statesman; yet we are told that in the debates on the abolition of the slave-trade, he defended slavery on the ground of the great men that it had produced. "If," he said, "honourable gentlemen would look into their Macrobius, they would find that half the ancient philosophers had been slaves." We are not concerned with Sir W. Young's logic, nor even with the accuracy of his reference; but it would hardly have been made had not the name of Macrobius meant something to the speaker and to the majority of his audience. In the present House of Commons there may be thirty members who have heard of Macrobius; we can think of only two or three who can by any possibility be supposed to have read him. Or, to take a greater name, Mr. Fox, an ardent politician, perhaps even a yet more ardent votary of pleasure, found time amid all his occupations and distractions to correspond on classical topics with the celebrated—or we should perhaps rather say notorious—Gilbert Wakefield, who was himself, to his own cost it may be said, a man of other callings. The present writer was many years ago talking with a relative of his own, then over eighty years old, who had for more than sixty years led a busy life as a banker in London. The old gentleman mentioned that he had just been reading, for the first time in his life, one of the less known Latin poets, and had found a good many fine things in him; in proof of which he proceeded to quote "off the reel" ten or a dozen lines of the author in question.

It was amid a generation like this, saturated with classical literature, and thinking no ornament so befitting a public man as a tincture of ancient letters, that Mr. Gladstone grew up. How far the immediate surroundings of his home were of a character to foster any natural tendency, we do not know. His father, Sir John Gladstone, has the reputation rather of a vigorous and upright man of business than of one interested in scholarship or letters; and the same would probably be true of most of those with whom he came in daily contact. There was, however, one not infrequent visitor to his father's house whose influence must undoubtedly have stimulated any literary or scholarly tastes which the boy possessed. It was in 1812, before William Gladstone had left the nursery, that a section of the electors of

**Influence of Canning.**

Liverpool invited George Canning to represent them in Parliament. The resolution embodying their wish was moved by Sir (then Mr.) John Gladstone: and another writer has shown that throughout the ten years during which Canning was member for Liverpool, Mr. Gladstone was his leading supporter.



GEORGE CANNING.

(*From the Portrait by Maurin.*)

When Canning ceased to represent Liverpool, William Gladstone was an Eton boy. One would like to think—and though, so far as we know, no direct evidence on the matter exists, it seems not improbable—that his intimacy with the most brilliant of old Etonians had some share in determining Mr. John Gladstone's choice of a school for his sons. It was a long journey from Liverpool to Eton in those days, and one would imagine that some special inducement would be needed to persuade a Liverpool merchant to pass by all nearer places of education

in favour of one so remote, with which he had no special connection. However this may be, the fact that Canning went for a great deal in the forming of the future statesman's mind rests on the best of all evidence, as has been shown in the preceding chapter.*

Now Canning was not only a statesman. Like the eminent persons already mentioned, and many another of that and the previous age, he was a man of letters and a scholar. At Eton and at Oxford he had been one of the most brilliant lads of his day. It was a day when clever boys, nowhere more than at Eton, learnt to handle the classical languages, especially Latin, almost as though they were living. They read, too, more widely than is common in these days, even among professed scholars; and as we have said, they retained the habit in later life. Almost without exception the statesmen of this century who have retained their scholarship have been Etonians.

At Eton Mr. Gladstone seems to have been noted rather as a hard-working than as a brilliant boy, so far as his school-work went; though he gained a reputation as an able translator from the classics. At Oxford as at Eton, his associates were those distinguished for intellectual pursuits and steady habits, and among them he took the lead. The accounts of contemporaries teem with testimonies to his influence. We find him organising an Essay Society, making speeches—not always, as we have seen, forgotten in after days—on the Tory side at the Union, and at the same time reading steadily both classics and mathematics to such good effect that he closed his University career with the highest honour which the University then had to offer, a double first-class.

During the earlier years of Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary life, though he does not seem to have written as freely as in the later years on subjects connected with literature and scholarship, these interests were by no means laid aside. We are told that his constant companions were Homer and Dante; and it is clear that he must have, as the phrase is, "kept up his classics," for in 1840 he was invited to act as examiner for the Newcastle Scholarship at Eton. This prize, which was founded just after Mr. Gladstone left the school, by the same Duke of Newcastle under whose auspices he had entered Parliament, has ever since been the "blue ribbon" of Eton scholarship, and the boy who wins it seldom fails, when he passes on to the University, to take a high place among the classical students of his year. Obviously, therefore, the task of adjudging it cannot be committed to one who has allowed his classical lore to grow rusty. Mr. Gladstone's colleague in this work was the late Lord Lyttelton, one of the finest scholars of his day, who had a few years before been at the head of the Classical Tripos at Cambridge. The two examiners were brothers-in-law, and this was not the last time that their names were associated in the bond of a common love for ancient literature. Twenty years later they participated in a volume of "Translations" into and from various languages. Lord Lyttelton's, which all belong to the former group, show unquestionably the finer scholarship and the more intimate grasp of Greek and Latin diction;

**Appointed an Examiner at Eton.**

* See pp. 77–78, 131, etc.

Mr. Gladstone's testify to a wider range of reading. The renderings from Italian and German are all in his portion of the book; and they serve to show that before he had long left the University—for most of the pieces, though not published till 1861, date from the "thirties"—Dante and Schiller were as familiar to him as Homer and Horace. One of his translations from the Italian poet may be given, as the book is now scarce, and many readers may not have access to it. Those who know the original lines in the third canto of the "Paradise" will recognise the fidelity of the version, all the more remarkable from the additional burden which the translator has put on himself through adherence to the somewhat complicated measure of the original.

"Love by his virtue, Brother, hath appeased
Our several wills: he causeth us to will
But what we have, all other longings eased.
Did we desire a region loftier still,
Such our desire were dissonant from His,
Who bade us each our several stations fill:
A thing impossible in these spheres of bliss,
If whoso dwelleth here, in Love alone
Must dwell, and if Love's nature well thou wis.
Within the will Divine to set our own
Is of the essence of this Being blest,
For that our wills to one with His be grown.
So, as we stand throughout the realms of rest,
From stage to stage, our pleasure is the King's,
Whose will our will informs, by Him imprest.
In His Will is our peace. To this all things
By Him created, or by Nature made,
As to a central sea, self-motion brings."

Here again is a spirited and on the whole wonderfully faithful rendering of a famous Homeric simile:—

"As when the billows gather fast
With slow and sullen roar,
Beneath the keen north-western blast,
Against the sounding shore:
First far at sea it rears its crest,
Then bursts upon the beach,
Or with proud arch and swelling breast,
Where headlands outward reach,
It smites their strength, and bellowing flings
Its silver foam afar;
So, stern and thick, the Danaan kings
And soldiers marched to war."

One of Mr. Gladstone's contributions to the joint work is a rendering into rhymed Latin verse of the famous hymn "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," in which he has aimed, not unsuccessfully, at catching the manner of the mediæval hymn-writers.

Mr. Gladstone's first appearance in print on a large scale as a classical student was in 1868, when he published his work called "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age." This was followed, eleven years later, by "Juventus Mundi: the Gods and Men of the Heroic Age," in which, as he tells his readers, the greater part of the results

arrived at in the earlier work are embodied, though with considerable modifications due to more extended reading. It is interesting to note that when this work appeared, its author had just become Prime Minister for the first time. It did not exhaust his activity in this line. In 1876 appeared "Homeric Synchronism; an Enquiry into the Time and Place of Homer," in which a good deal of use was made of recent researches into ancient Egyptian history. The connection of ancient Greek customs, domestic and religious, with the East, and the attempt to distinguish between such as formed a part of primitive Hellenic culture, and those which were introduced from Western Asia through the agency of later intercourse with traders and others belonging to the scientific family of mankind, more especially the Phœnicians, is another branch of Homeric study which appears always to have interested Mr. Gladstone. Some of his conclusions in regard to it will be found in an article contributed by him to the *Nineteenth Century* in 1889, entitled "Phœnician Affinities of Ithaca." Here, as in everything else which Mr. Gladstone wrote on these matters, the reader finds evidence of study ranging over an amazingly wide field, as well as, no doubt, of a certain tendency to build up far-reaching conclusions on inferences which themselves rest upon a substructure of established fact somewhat precariously combined with conjecture, but withal of a buoyant enthusiasm for the whole subject, not only stimulating in itself, but astounding in an aged man, not yet disentangled from the duties and anxieties of a leading political position.

**Homeric Studies.**

With two exceptions, "Homeric Synchronism" was the last volume published by Mr. Gladstone on Homeric matters. Of these the best known, small but packed with matter, is the "Homeric Primer," published in 1878; a date at which the veteran statesman, though not in office, and nominally only one of the rank and file of the Opposition, was, as all the world knows, very much in the forefront of the battle. This little book, which forms one of the series of Literature and History Primers, edited by the late Mr. J. R. Green, is in some ways the most remarkable of its author's productions. It represents the study of some fifty years compressed into a small compass, and set out in clear and popular language, so that it may be read with interest and profit even by those who cannot read a letter of Greek, so only that they have that love of literature which is irrespective of age or language.

Mr. Gladstone looks at Homer—one cannot but speak of "Homer" as an individual, whatever learned men may have to say about the composite character of the poems which bear his name—he looks at Homer as Horace did long ago. Homer is for him not merely the master of resounding verse, the recorder of ancient customs, the storehouse of ancient mythology, but he is also the almost inspired sage who teaches

> "What's fair, what foul, how wise men act, how fools,
> Better than all the lore of all the schools."

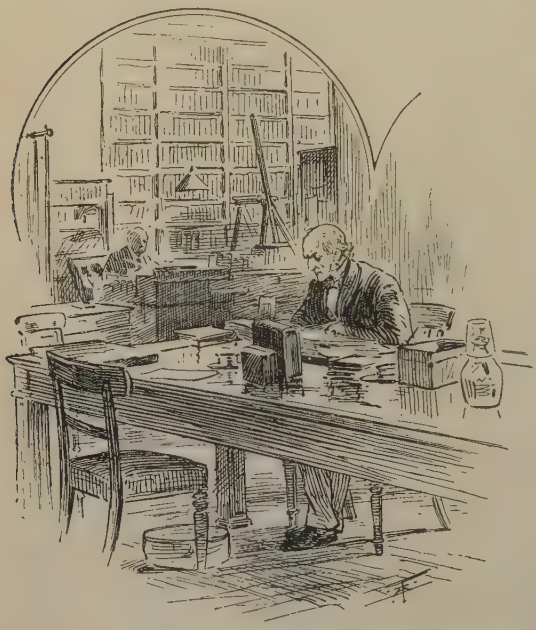
With the theory just mentioned, the professorial theory as it has been termed, of the origin of the Homeric poems—namely, that they are a combination or patchwork of a great number of popular ballads produced by many different authors at many different periods, and pieced

THE COLLEGE HALL, ETON.

*Photo: Hills and Saunders, Eton.*

together by an editor or editors at a comparatively late date -- Mr. Gladstone had, as may be supposed, not much sympathy. Even the modified forms of it, that which makes the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" the work of different authors, and that which further assigns part of the "Iliad" to the author of the "Odyssey," were more than he was prepared to accept. Homer—whoever may be designated under that traditional name—is for him Homer, as surely as Virgil is Virgil, as Dante is Dante. A highly characteristic sample of his method of meeting "separatist" theories was given in a paper much discussed at the time, called "The Slicing of Hector," which was published in the *Nineteenth Century* for October, 1878. It opens thus:—

An Opponent of "Separatism."



MR. GLADSTONE STUDYING AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

"The ingenuity of modern mechanism, as I am told, cuts a skin of Morocco leather right down its interior tissue into two skins, and with a loss of solidity and durability produces a doubled superficies of available material, genuine in a certain sense. A like process has been instituted by some of the distinguished scholars who agree in dividing the Homeric poems into two integral masses. This slicing process is applied to, and in part founded on, a bisection of many principal Homeric characters, each of whom is placed before us in a dual personality, according to his 'presentment' in these segments respectively. Hector, among the rest, is divided into two Hectors; and, as is alleged, with two different sets of attributes. The question I have now to ask is whether we shall accept this dualism for Hector, or shall still be content to have him in the singular number."

The article is a criticism of the views of Sir William Geddes of Aberdeen, who in a recent work had maintained the soberer thesis of two separate component parts in the "Iliad," assigning a large portion of the poem to a separate author, whom he deemed to be also the author of the "Odyssey." One of his arguments was based on alleged discrepancies in the presentation of the Trojan chief's character. Mr. Gladstone contends that these discrepancies, such as they are, are no more than might have been expected from a single author divided between his desire to portray a noble and heroic character and his patriotic preference for the cause to which the hero was opposed. "As I take it, the composition of his Hector was, if not the greatest substantive feat he had to accomplish, yet the greatest difficulty he had to surmount." He shows that Homer steadily keeps the Trojan Asiatic type inferior to the more robust European type of the Greeks. "Firmness of tissue is the prevailing

quality of the Achaian chieftains; and the want of it is the note of their opponents." Yet Hector must not "as an unworthy antagonist disparage Achilles"; may we not add that Homer himself shared the affection which every reader feels for the chivalrous hero, in spite of his faults more truly a gentleman than any other personage in the poem? Homer has attained his end by determining that the variability which is inseparable from the Trojan type should in Hector's case "range over the largest possible scale. Hence we have in him sharper and more numerous contrasts than in any other character of the poem. A coarseness which occasionally comes near brutality is united with domestic affection in which alone he is profound, and with a gentleness ascribed in the 'Iliad' to no one but him. . . . No man is more rash; but none has a deeper sentiment of the future. . . . He could even descend to be a coward; while at the very last, in the presence of a more terrible warrior, when driven absolutely to bay, he rose to be a perfect hero."

Whether we agree with Mr. Gladstone's view or not, it must be admitted that the evidence with which he supports it shows an extraordinarily minute knowledge of the text. Not an incident, not an epithet is overlooked which can be pressed into the service of his argument. Mr. George Russell, in his biography of Mr. Gladstone published a few years ago, quotes some words spoken by him to the Eton boys in 1891, which very well set forth his attitude towards his favourite author:—

"You cannot really study the text of Homer without gathering fruits; and the more you study him, the more you will be astonished at the multitude of lessons and the completeness of the picture which he gives you. There is a perfect encyclopædia of human character and human experience in the poems of Homer."

In the "Primer" mentioned above, there is a fine passage in which Mr. Gladstone expands his view of the moral teaching to be found in Homer. After pointing out "the remarkable fidelity and consistency with which the poet uses his command over the sympathies of his hearers, so as to divert them towards good persons and good ends, and to estrange them from the bad," he proceeds:—

**Homer's Moral Teaching.**

"In the very groundwork both of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the cause of Greece and the cause of Ulysses, which gain the upper hand, are each the cause of right, justice, and the family order. Not only is this so, but in each particular case we are impelled or led in such a way by the master that we like and dislike as we ought to like or dislike; and, again, not only as to the main distinction between good and bad, but even as to the shades of each. In the *Iliad* Paris, Aphrodite, and Thersites, in the *Odyssey* the Suitors and the paramour Melantho, are made odious to us. There is no tampering with the greatest moral laws; as far as Homer knows right, he works it out loyally into the tissue of his poems. The splendid gifts of Achilles and Ulysses do not inspire an undiscriminating admiration; we feel free to censure the savage element in the retribution administered to the gross offence of Agamemnon, and to question the terrible sternness, in some points, of the tragedy in the Ithacan palace. The splendid beauty, and even the gracious penitential humility, of Helen do not bewitch us into a forgetfulness that she had erred. Our unmixed sympathy is reserved for characters such as the grand Penelope, the affectionate Andromache; for Nausicaa, the flower of maidenhood; for Eumaios, the picture of an intelligent, sound-hearted, and devoted dependant. No small proportion of writers in the Christian period fail to carry our instincts of approval and disapproval to their proper aims with the unfailing rectitude of Homer."

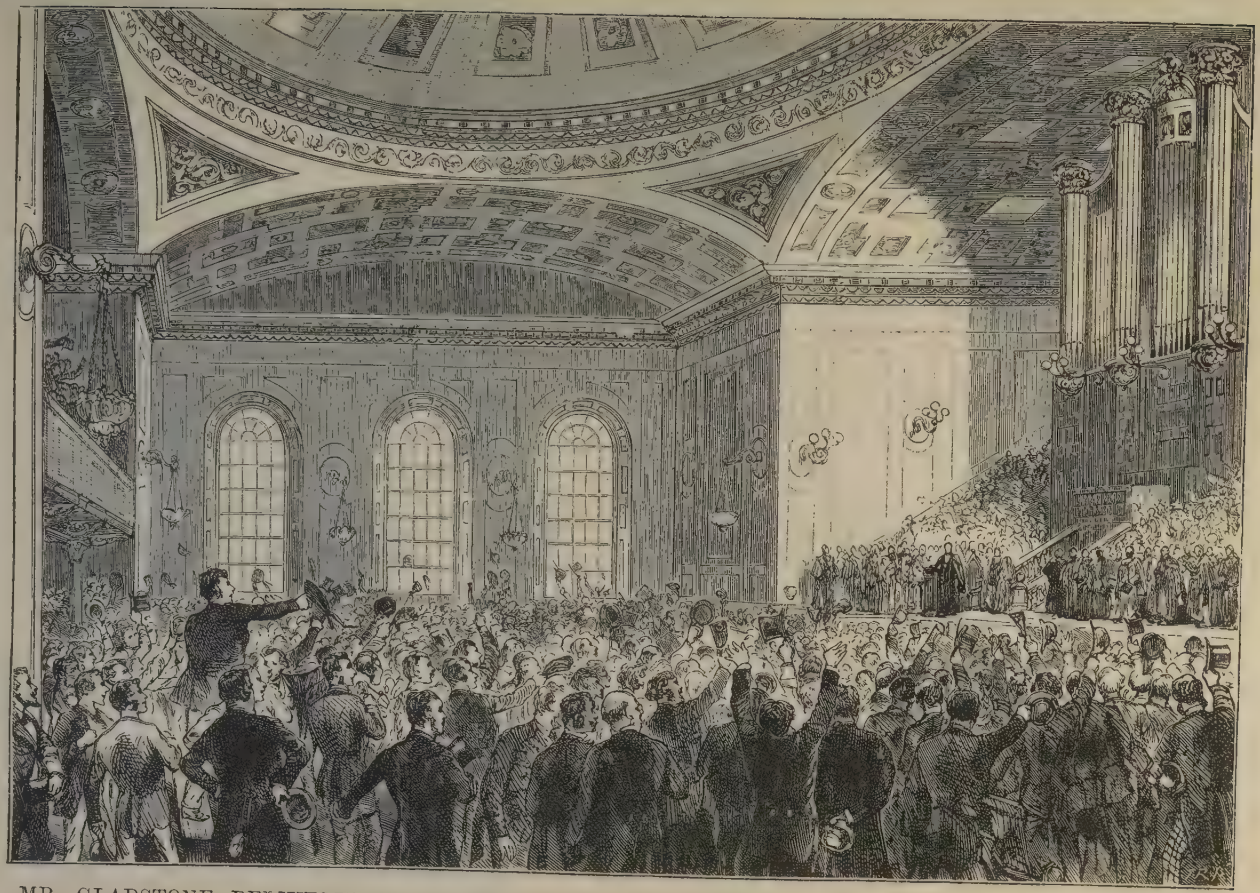
Experts, we believe, hold that in some of his speculations on Homeric matters, Mr. Gladstone is apt to stray somewhat too far into the regions of fancy; or become, as Lord Tennyson put it, "a little hobby-horsical"—though the poet hastened to add: "his hobby-horse is of the intellect and with a grace." Experts are perhaps not always very willing to allow that a person can know anything of their own subject who happens to have some knowledge of any other; and it must be conceded that Mr. Gladstone's sympathies were too wide, and his imagination, it may be, too exuberant, to allow him ever to become a critical or philological scholar of the most highly finished type. But no one can fail to find his Homeric enthusiasm contagious; and traces, not very remote, of his influence may, we think, be found in the work of younger "Homerologists" (the word, we believe, is his own), who would not be very ready to admit, nay, who perhaps are not conscious of, any obligation to him.

Be that as it may, it can hardly be denied that his survey of the Homeric poems as literature, his familiarity with their details, his insight into Homer's method, have never been surpassed. Nor can it be doubted that his own public career, teaching him, in the Homeric phrase, "to know the mind of many men," must have been all to his advantage in the interpretation of that acute observer of humanity. Who, for instance, would be better qualified to appreciate the Homeric constitution, the council of the chiefs, the assembly of the people, than one who so long bore his share in the council of a yet mightier polity, and swayed a hundred assemblies with his eloquence? Some of the most interesting sections in "Juventus Mundi," the substance of which is repeated in the "Primer," deal with these matters, and with the position of oratory in Homer. As showing the minute study which Mr. Gladstone had made of his author on the political and social side, a passage may be quoted in which a topic closely connected with this of oratory is discussed. We give it as it appears in the "Primer":—

**His Interpretation of Homer.**

> "He has completed our view of this great spring of political life [viz. oratory] by an ingenious contrivance, used to show that the ordinary Achaian mind worked and passed judgment upon all sorts of matters that were presented to the people in mass. His agent is *Tis*, or Somebody; the common thought, the embodied sense of the lookers-on. The declarations of *Tis*, introduced with the formula, 'But thus observed somebody, looking to his neighbour beside him,' are invariably brief and pithy, and they are likewise always right. When there is a common interest of the Achaians and Trojans, the *Tis* appears as both Trojan and Achaian. There is a *Tis* of Olympus, and a *Tis* even of the dissolute Suitors, and he speaks exactly what, though in itself wrong, is apt from their point of view. Moreover this case is of interest, because it shows how deeply Homer was imbued with the idea of a common mind working in every community, so that his men were not stones or dolls, but men in very deed."

Surely a bit of observation like this, showing Homer as a subtle interpreter of the human mind, is likely to be more effective in attracting readers to the poems than a wilderness of erudition expended on curiosities of grammar and dialect, or the tabulation of "false archaisms," to prove that they were concocted by a "syndicate" centuries after their supposed date. What does it matter if they were? One can only say, so much the better for the age which possessed men capable of producing and appreciating them.



MR. GLADSTONE DELIVERING HIS ADDRESS AS LORD RECTOR OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY (*p.* 146).

The latest of Mr. Gladstone's works on Homeric matters appeared in 1890, under the title "Landmarks of Homeric Study." It is a small book, and may almost be regarded as a syllabus or brief summary of his final views on the subject to which he had devoted so much study.

This would seem an appropriate point at which to draw attention to Mr. Gladstone's attitude towards classical studies in general. In the Inaugural Address delivered by him in 1860, as Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, we find this eloquently stated. After admitting that the value of these studies is less immediately apparent than that of professional or technical education, and pointing out that nevertheless "the most distinguished professional men bear witness in favour of a course of education in which to train the mind shall be the first object, and to stock it only the second," he proceeds :—

**An Advocate of Classical Studies.**

"Man is to be trained chiefly by studying and by knowing man; and we are prepared for knowing man in life by learning him first in books. . . . But if man is to be studied in books, he will best be studied in such books as present him to us in the largest, strongest, simplest, in a word, the most typical forms. These forms are principally found among the ancients.

"Nor can the study of the ancients be dissociated from the study of their languages. There is a profound relation between thought and the investiture which it chooses for itself; and it is, as a general rule, most true that we cannot know men or nations unless we know their tongue. Diversity of language was, like labour, a temporal penalty inflicted on our race for sin; but being, like labour, originally penal, like labour, it becomes, by the ordinance of God, a fertile source of blessing for those who use it aright. It is the instrument of thought, but it is not a blind or dead instrument, it . . . reacts upon and bears up the thoughts from which it springs, and serves to take rank among the most effective powers for the discipline of the mind."

The case for "the humanities" as against the exclusive pursuit of an education directed to obviously and immediately practical results, has seldom been more forcibly stated. Mr. Russell quotes from a letter, written in the year after those words were spoken, some words bearing on the same topic: "The modern European civilisation from the Middle Ages downward is the compound of two great factors—the Christian religion for the soul of man, and the Greek discipline for his mind and intellect. . . . The materials of what we call classical training . . . were advisedly and providentially prepared in order that it might become . . . the complement of Christianity."

It will have been seen that what distinguished Mr. Gladstone's position towards classical scholarship from that of other eminent men to whom we have referred—the Pulteneys, the Foxes, the Derbys, the Carnarvons—was the seriousness which he brought to his handling of it. It was no mere reminiscence of youth, or elegant exercise, no diversion to be taken up in the intervals of business or in hours of relaxation from the sterner duties of life. On the contrary, it was always with him; one is tempted to wonder whether it did not hold the first place in his interests. At any rate, one has only to turn over a page or two of the "Studies" or "Juventus Mundi" to see that he attacks his subject from no dilettante point of view. He read apparently all the literature connected with it, and allowed nothing to escape him which can throw any light upon it. Thus when a learned German, Dr. Ohnefalsch-Richter, produced a learned work

**His Seriousness as a Classical Scholar.**

10, Downing Street,
Whitehall.
Feb. 3. 1893

Dear Sir

A thorough examination of your work, which would have been my best excuse for compliance with your desire, has unfortunately been out of my power, in consequence of the heavy demands upon my time together with some other causes.

Aided, however, by the references which you kindly supplied, I have made myself sufficiently acquainted with it to be deeply impressed with its importance as a substantial contribution to the great work of unifying and integrating the archaic knowledge which has recently been obtained in so many branches, and so many quarters.

Cyprus was I apprehend a great advanced post of Phœnician navigation, commerce and civilisation, and it may prove to have been the richest storehouse of illustrative remains supplied by that race, which played so momentous a part in human development.

Your views of the Astarte Aphrodite, so far as I have been able to examine them, appear to me to be in close correspondence with the evidence supplied by the text of Homer. And it may be worthy of note, with reference to the Gorgoneion, that while the Shield of Agamemnon associates it with Cyprus, the only other mention (if I remember right) of the Gorgon in Homer is in the Underworld of the Eleventh Odyssey which is I conceive altogether exotic, that is to say Phœnician, in its character.

I could wish that this letter were more worthy of its occasion but you will I am sure excuse its insufficiency on account of the circumstances under which it is written. I have the honour to remain

dear Sir
Yours very faithfully & obliged

W. E. Gladstone

I take the liberty of enclosing a recent pamphlet of my own, somewhat slight in its texture, which has certain points of relation with your work.

REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF MR. GLADSTONE'S LETTER* TO DR. OHNEFALSCH-RICHTER CONCERNING HIS WORK "KYPROS."

(*By courtesy of Messrs. Asher & Co., Covent Garden, W.*)

* The letter reads as follows:—"A thorough examination of your work, which would have been my best excuse for compliance with your desire, has unfortunately been out of my power, in consequence of the heavy demands upon my time together with some other causes.

"Aided, however, by the references which you kindly supplied, I have made myself sufficiently acquainted with it to be deeply impressed with its importance as a substantial contribution to the great work of unifying and integrating the archaic knowledge which has recently been obtained in so many branches, and so many quarters.

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on the Antiquities of Cyprus, Mr. Gladstone was all ready to welcome it in a letter of four quarto pages, a fac-simile of which adorns the English edition of the book, and is here reproduced. It is with wonder, not unmixed with a little amusement, that the reader perceives the date of the letter to be February, 1893—that is to say, a week or two after he had met the new Parliament as Premier for the fourth time, at the age of eighty-three, and having on his hands perhaps the most anxious measure for which he had in his whole career been responsible.

**Mr. Punch's Banter.**

Mr. Gladstone's devotion to Homer had, of course, been in its time the subject of good-humoured banter. In the early 'seventies—that is, during the latter part of his first tenure of the Premiership—Mr. Punch was remarkably Homeric. No one can have forgotten Sir John Tenniel's delightful cartoon, "A Deplorable Sceptic." Mr. Lowe, himself a fine classical scholar, but one whose manners had not exactly been softened by the cultivation of the literature of antiquity, had, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, been appealed to for a grant from the public funds in aid of a proposed exploration of the plain of Troy, and had met the appeal with a somewhat contemptuous refusal. The cartoon represents the two statesmen in the characters of Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Prig over their tea, and the legend runs as follows:

*Sairey Gamp.* "Quite right to refuge the money, my precious Bobsey, but I was sorry to read your languidge to that dear Lord Stanhope about Troy, and Achilles, and 'Omer, which it's well beknown I studies 'im day and night."

*Bobsey Prig.* "Bother your 'Omers, and your Achilleses, and your Troys! I don't believe as there was ever no such persons!"

The cynical half-smile of one gossip, the open-mouthed horror of the other, are inimitably portrayed.

A few months earlier Mr. Gladstone is found lamenting that—

> "Each hour of the day some fresh duty elicits;
> The world little recks of their jading amount;
> My readings of Homer come seldom, like visits
> Of angels. Their sum on my fingers I count.
>
> "The last time I looked into Homer, I read it
> How Atlas the Prudent, as deep as the sea,
> Bears the world on his shoulders. And this, on my credit,
> I think 'my friend Homer' intended for me."

Another cartoon is somewhat more serious in tone. The Prime Minister has fallen asleep in his chair, his Homer beside him. The ghost of the

right) of the Gorgon in Homer is in the Underworld of the Eleventh Odyssey which is as I conceive altogether exotic, that is to say, Phœnician, in its character.

"I could wish that this letter were more worthy of its occasion; but you will I am sure excuse its insufficiency on account of the circumstances under which it is written. I have the honour to remain,

"Dear Sir,

"Your very faithful and obedient

"W. E. GLADSTONE.

"I take the liberty of enclosing a recent paper of my own, somewhat slight in its texture, which has certain points of relation with your work."

bard rises, and pointing to some disorderly mob of strikers and others in the distance—Mr. Punch went through a phase of somewhat nervous Conservatism in social matters a quarter of a century ago—quotes "Mr. Pope's translation of a passage of mine, Sir":—

> "But if a clamorous vile plebeian rose,
> Him with reproof he checked, or tamed with blows:
> 'Be silent, wretch, and think not here allowed
> That worst of tyrants, a usurping crowd.'"

SIR JOHN TENNIEL'S CARTOON "A DEPLORABLE SCEPTIC," IN *PUNCH* (*p.* 148).

(*By courtesy of Messrs. Bradbury and Agnew, Ltd.*)

Classical studies, as has been already hinted, had, in Mr. Gladstone's view, a side on which they come in contact with problems far removed from the sphere of mere intellectual pastime. Holding firmly as he did to the belief in a Providential order of the world, he naturally was unwilling to treat as outside that order a people who have played so great a part (to use his own words) on the stage of history, and have left so indelible a mark upon the character of the human race, as have that Greek people whose genius in its primitive and least corrupted form is reflected in the Homeric writings. "The rearing and training of mankind for the Gospel," he says further, "was not confined to that eminent and

**The Hellenic Element in Civilisation.**

conspicuous part of the process which is represented by the dispensations given to the Patriarchs and the Jews."

The address from which these phrases are taken was delivered by Mr. Gladstone before the University of Edinburgh in 1865, at the conclusion of his term of office as Lord Rector, under the title of "The Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order." It is an eloquent defence of the claims of Greece to have secured through her art and her philosophy due recognition for physical and intellectual excellence. We have learnt from Mr. Matthew Arnold to distinguish between the "Hellenic" and the "Hebraic" factors in human nature, with their insistence respectively on the claims of beauty and of duty. Mr. Gladstone's leading thought is not very dissimilar, save that he is more concerned to show the actual results achieved, under Providence, by the persistence of the Hellenic element in European civilisation. Pointing out the danger which Christianity and civilisation with it were at one moment running from the tendency to debase unduly every part of man's nature that was not directly concerned with conduct, he shows how this tendency, "by severing the Gospel from all else that is beautiful and glorious in creation, would have exposed the spiritual teacher to a resistance not only vehement but just, and would have placed the kingdom of grace in permanent and hopeless discord with the kingdoms of nature, reason, truth, and beauty, kingdoms established by the very same Almighty Hand."

Christianity is no doubt the salt of the earth; but, he suggestively adds, "the salt is one thing, the thing salted is another." The function, he would say, of the Greek culture and the Greek intellect was to bring into the most perfect condition the material which it was the task of the Gospel to render incorruptible; a nobler conception surely, and more exalting to human nature, than that of those who, whether with condemnation or with approbation, would wholly isolate, each from the other, its æsthetic, its intellectual, and its moral elements.

With these feelings as to the dignity of ancient learning, it is not strange that Mr. Gladstone should have always taken a deep interest in the venerable institutions in which more than elsewhere that learning finds a home—the ancient Universities. "If," said he in his inaugural address at Edinburgh, "apart from what may be the counsels of Providence as to ultimate success, it lay essentially in the nature of Christianity that it should aim at nothing less than the entire regeneration of human nature and society, such a conception as that of the University was surely her appropriate ally." To his own University of Oxford his attachment never wavered. Even when smarting from his rejection, after eighteen years' service as its Parliamentary representative, he could say, in words which have been quoted in an earlier chapter, "I have loved the University of Oxford with a deep and passionate love. . . If my affection is of the smallest advantage to that great, that ancient, that noble institution, that advantage—such as it is, and it is most insignificant—Oxford will possess as long as I breathe." Such indeed was Mr. Gladstone's devotion to his own University that sometimes he has been thought not to do full justice to its principal rival. The distinguished head of one of the colleges at Cambridge found himself one day, between 1880 and 1885, in the company of the Prime Minister. In

**Attitude towards the Universities.**

the course of conversation Mr. Gladstone made some remark disparaging the capacity of Cambridge for producing statesmen. "I told him," said the Master, "that he had six Cambridge men at that moment in his Cabinet; but as I heard him repeat the observation the next day, I suppose he did not believe me." Probably in the energy of conversation the statement may have been made in somewhat too general terms; the names of Pitt, Melbourne, Palmerston, show that as Cambridge can sometimes win a boat-race, so she can sometimes produce a Prime Minister. But there was a basis of truth underlying Mr. Gladstone's contention; as he was able to show when delivering the first Romanes Lecture at Oxford some years later. In the course of this "Academic Sketch," as he calls it—the irreverent might suggest that "Our Noble Selves" had been a better title—he points out that from Lord North to Lord Salisbury, every one of the Chancellors of the University who have held office during a period of 120 years, "six in number, has also been, or has become, a Prime Minister of this country." If to these we add Canning, Peel, the lecturer himself, who at the time when he spoke had just entered upon the office for the fourth time, and Lord Rosebery, the preponderance of Oxford as a trainer of Prime Ministers would seem to be established beyond controversy.

Oxford and Cambridge.

This lecture is in its way one of Mr. Gladstone's most remarkable feats in that field of his activity which we are at present considering. At the time when he delivered it, he had, as has been said, just become Prime Minister for the fourth time. He was within a couple of months of completing his eighty-third year. Yet he could find leisure to prepare, and energy to deliver, a masterly summary of the progress of the University from its first beginning in the Middle Ages down to the present century, comparing its development with that of its great rivals, Paris and Cambridge, and commemorating its famous men. The noble eulogy, for such it is, of a noble institution does not confine itself to past glories, but breathes a spirit of confidence for the future, coupled with some wise words of caution as to the spirit in which the old Universities, if they are to hold their predominance, and do for England in the future what they have done in the past, must accept the conditions of modern life.

It was mentioned at the outset that Mr. Gladstone's literary interests were not limited to Homer. As befitted one who was always an ardent lover of Italy, to whom indeed Italy may be said to owe no small share of the gratitude due for aid in raising herself from the "geographical expression" that she was forty years ago to the united nation that she is to-day, he was a student of no mean attainments in Italian literature. No inconsiderable portion of his library was devoted to books relating to Dante; and those who have carried their studies of that poet beyond the first stages know that he is capable by himself of providing occupation for more than all a busy man's spare time. So far as we know, besides the specimens of translation already spoken of, Mr. Gladstone's sole published contribution to the study of Dante is an article that appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1892, on the subject of a visit which some authorities allege that Dante made to Oxford. The evidence for this visit is not, it

Studies in Italian Literature.

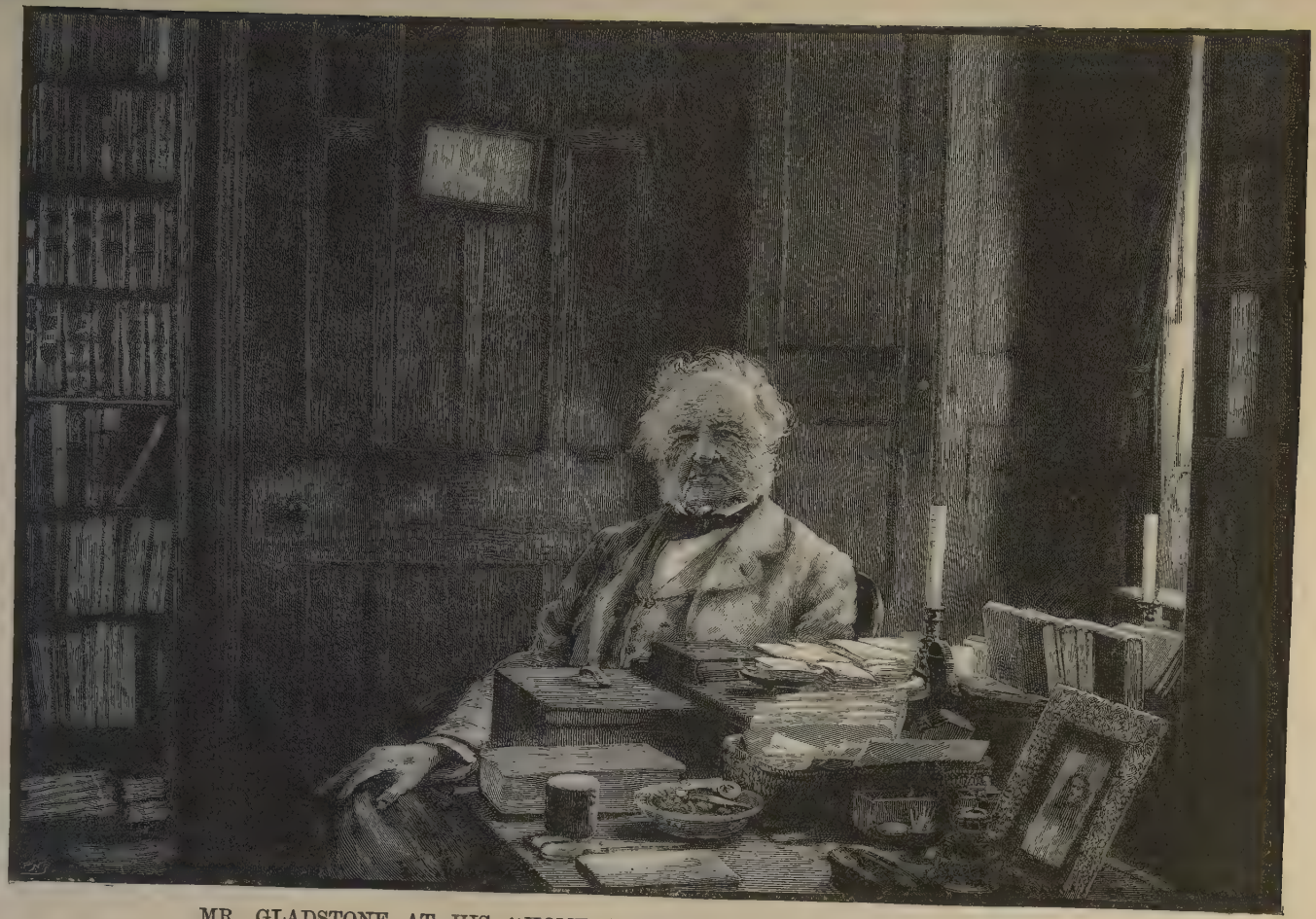
must be confessed, very strong, and it may be doubted if Mr. Gladstone's arguments, some of which tempt the reader to recall Dante's own line, "Affection bends the judgment to her ply," induced many persons to accept it as proved. Indeed, we do not feel sure that they had that effect on himself; at any rate, in the lecture above referred to, which was delivered shortly after the publication of the article, there is no hint that Dante may have been among the eminent men whom the growing fame of Oxford attracted from foreign parts. The article is, however, interesting as a good presentment of such evidence as there is in favour of the tale, ingeniously reinforced by certain collateral considerations.

An earlier excursion of Mr. Gladstone's into the fields of Italian literature was a brilliant essay on the unhappy poet Leopardi. Though perhaps the greatest name among the Italian poets of the present century, Leopardi is little known in England now, and even in 1850, when the paper appeared (in the *Quarterly Review*), it may be supposed that few people had heard or remembered his name. It is curious, by the way, to notice that in the "Gleanings" of 1879, among which this essay was reprinted, Mr. Gladstone appended a note commenting on "the deplorable and barbarous neglect of the Italian tongue and literature," which, he says, "had begun, but had scarcely begun, to be felt among us in 1850, but is now general and hardened." It may be hoped that the last twenty years have brought some improvement in this respect; though even to-day Italian literature can hardly be said to be studied as it deserves, when the Civil Service Commissioners have found it necessary to strike it out of their list of subjects in which candidates may offer themselves for examination. It is not the least of the misfortunes of Italy that the study of her language, the purest representative of Latin, for so many centuries the language of empire, should in a country so rich in scholarship as England have come to be regarded as little more than a pastime for the dilettante.

Translating Horace.

As an old Etonian, there was one task which Mr. Gladstone was bound sooner or later to take up. If Etonians in the old days learnt nothing else, at least they learnt their Horace; and no man who knew his Horace, retained his love of the classics into mature life, and possessed Mr. Gladstone's command of the English language, could fail to try his hand in an enterprise where many have fairly prospered, while no one has ever achieved, or probably ever will achieve, such a success as would entitle him to claim the ground for his own to the exclusion of all later comers. In the volume of translations produced in partnership with Lord Lyttelton, Mr. Gladstone had given a specimen or two of Horace in English, and a few more appeared subsequently in magazines; but the production of a complete version of the Odes was deferred till after his final resignation of office in 1894, when it seemed not unfitly to indicate with a kind of triumph that the man of letters had after all succeeded in outliving the politician.

Perhaps what most strikes the reader in Mr. Gladstone's rendering of Horace's Odes, besides its general fidelity to the original, and the compression of the language—an object, as he tells us, at which he especially aimed—is a certain dignified simplicity, passing occasionally into stiffness, such as we are accustomed rather to associate with the verse of the last century. There is no need here to go into minuter



MR. GLADSTONE AT HIS "HOMER" DESK IN HIS STUDY AT HAWARDEN.

criticism; but it may be said that Mr. Gladstone at his best—and, curiously enough, he is often at his best in the lighter odes—holds his own well with any of his predecessors. The following may be taken as a good average sample of his work—

"Neither always tempt the deep,
Nor, Licinius, always keep,
Fearing storms, the slippery beach:
Such the rule of life I teach.

"Golden is the middle state;
Love the middle gifts of fate,
Not the squalid sloven cot,
Proud and envied palace not.

"Tallest pines must oftenest bend,
And the tallest tower descend;
Heaviest falls from loftiest heights;
'Tis the tops that lightning smites.

"Fear in good times, hope in ill,
Wise and well-trained bosoms fill;
Angry winters come from Jove,
Jove those winters will remove."

We may conclude with a quotation from another ode, in which every subsequent translator has had before his eyes as he worked the mighty name of Dryden. Putting him out of the competition, we do not think that Mr. Gladstone's version is much inferior to the best.

"Of purpose, God all future doom
Wraps in a darkness thick as night,
And smiles in scorn, if man presume
Beyond the boundary lines of right.

"Hold fast the present. All beside
Shifts, as a shifting stream will now
Towards Tuscan waters gently glide,
Then hurl from off some craggy brow

"Boulders and trees, and flocks and sheds,
With woods' and mountains' echoing sound;
As the wild deluge fills the beds,
And bursts the margins all around.

"Self-ruled, light-hearted shall he be,
Who daily 'I have lived' can say;
Dark tempests let the Sire decree,
Or brightness, for the coming day,

"Yet cannot he the bygone days
Unmake, or hold the past undone,
Nor can with utmost might erase
The work of hours whose glass is run."

This is Horace's "Advice to a Statesman;" it is advice by which Mr. Gladstone could on occasion show himself capable of profiting; nor, indeed, has any better recipe been devised for the maintenance of the undimmed eye and the unabated force to an age far beyond that at which life usually becomes labour and sorrow.

ARTHUR JOHN BUTLER.

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# CHAPTER IV.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS A TORY—1832-1841.

"Full many a fond expectant eye is bent
Where Newark's towers are mirrored in the Trent."—GEORGE FOX.

The Last of the Unreformed Parliaments—The Old Order and the New—The Borough of Newark-upon-Trent—The Duke of Newcastle—Mr. Gladstone's First Election Address—A Second Address—A Heckling—The Tory Rout in the Country—A Government of Whig Aristocrats—The Old St. Stephen's—A Liverpool Election—Mr. Gladstone's Maiden Speech—Speech on Slavery: England and her Colonies—Speech on Electoral Corruption—O'Connell's Reply—Defending the Irish Church—Death of A. H. Hallam—Opposing the Duke of Wellington—The Effects of Reform—The Melbourne Government Formed—University Tests—The Melbourne Government Dismissed—Peel's Administration—Mr. Gladstone Selected for Office—First Interview with Lord Aberdeen—Roebuck and the Disaffected Canadians—Mr. Gladstone's First Bill—The Irish Church—Mr. Gladstone and the Oxford Movement—Lord Melbourne's Return to Office—The Municipal Corporations Bill Mutilated—In Rooms at the Albany—Denouncing O'Connell—Coercion for Canada—Church Rates—An Aborigines Committee—The New Parliament (1837)—Elementary Education—A Call from Tennyson—The Canadian Rebellion—Mr. Gladstone Attacks the Philosophical Radicals—The Apprentice System—James Grant's Estimate of Mr. Gladstone—Correspondence with Samuel Wilberforce—Approximating to Tractarianism—The Maynooth Grant—Mr. Gladstone Replies to Lord Morpeth—His Book on State and Church—Adverse Criticism—In Sicily—At Rome—Macaulay on Gladstone—Gladstone on Macaulay—Suspension of the Jamaica Constitution—Lord Melbourne Resigns—Mr. Gladstone's Marriage—The China Question: Entering the Lists with Macaulay—Joining Grillion's Club—Growing Hatred of Slavery—Still a Tory.

ON the 7th of June, 1832, the Reform Bill became an Act, and on December 3rd of the same year, the last of the Unreformed Parliaments was dissolved; the old order was to give place to a new one, a different spirit was to come over Parliament. The people had won the first great battle in their long campaign with the privileged classes.

From this time the popularity of a measure began to be regarded as a positive argument in its favour, and it came gradually to be recognised that to redress grievances is more statesmanlike than to suppress riots. The great measures for the reform of the Poor Law and of Municipal Corporations soon proved that petitions have their abuses and commissions their uses, and that an apt citation from a Blue Book may be even more convincing than an elegiac couplet. But prejudices die hard and abuses die harder in the most conservative of all countries.

**The Old Order and the New.**

Many legislative blunders had to be made before it could be fully and generally recognised that the most admirably selected lines of study, the completest courses of logic and metaphysic, the cultivation of literary taste, the accumulation of the political records and political theories of the past, do not in themselves provide even the subtlest and most sympathetic mind with the materials for sound political judgment;

that those are merely the instruments which enable the politician to test present conditions and reason from present experiences. For those who are debarred from the political laboratory, ignorant of present conditions of society, dialectic becomes mere disputation and learning degenerates into pedantry. When we remember that the ruling classes were never taught or expected to examine minutely the conditions of the poor, their food, their homes, their religious instincts, their political desires, we can hardly wonder that Canning and Canning's pupil shared the "idle and futile fears" which distracted the mind of Mr. Disraeli in 1866

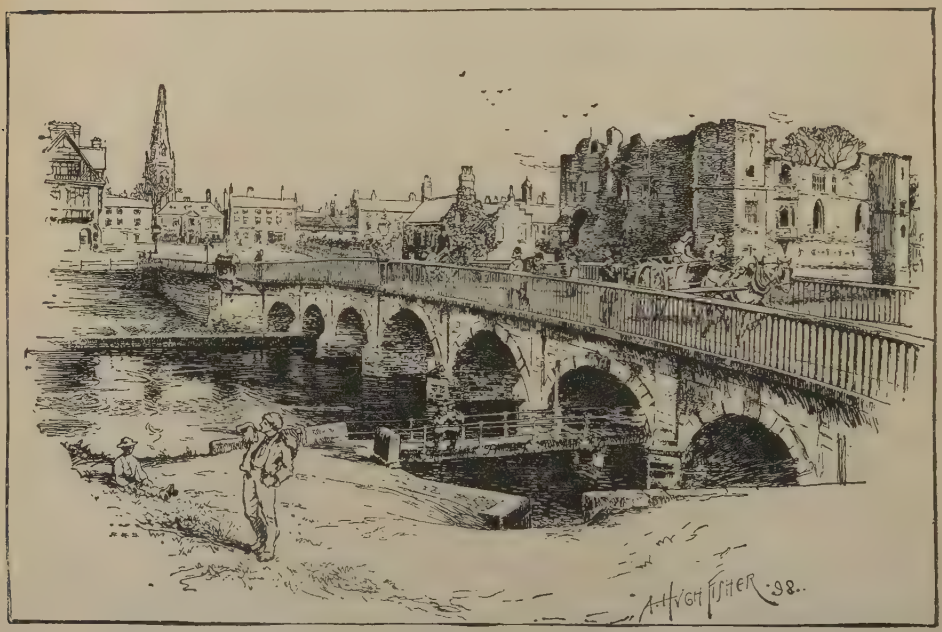


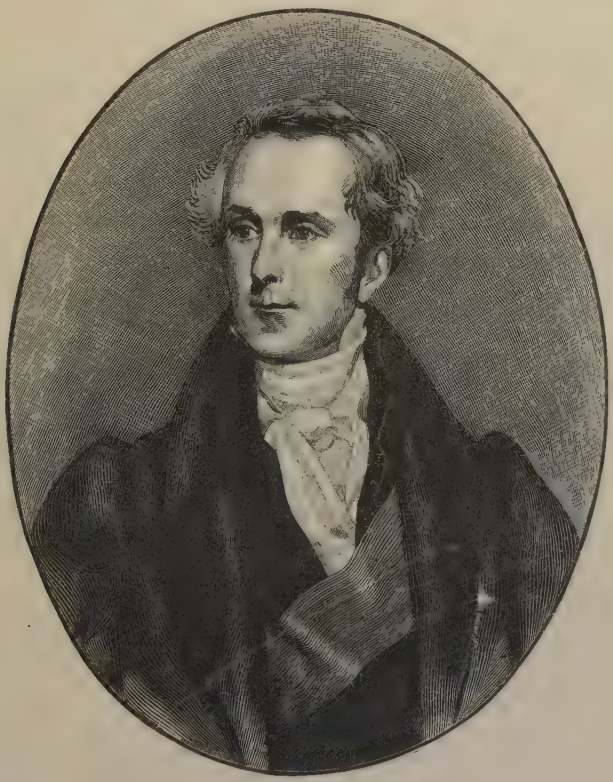

*Photo: J. McLeod, Newark.*

VIEW OF NEWARK-UPON-TRENT.

—though not in 1867. The type of statesman to which Canning belonged, and to which Mr. Gladstone closely conformed, was the best result of the system of close boroughs. A close borough was a property which might produce either a financial or a political rent. Some seats were let at a thousand a year; but a considerable number of these "convenient entries" into the House of Commons were reserved for young gentlemen who had recommended themselves to the party leaders by a college reputation, a clever pamphlet, or a rhetorical period at a county meeting. If these men improved their fame in Parliament, they became in their turn Ministers and great men, and naturally displayed their loyalty to a system which had pressed their own talents into the service of their country. Thus Mr. Pitt sent for young Mr. Canning, and Lord Lansdowne for young Mr. Macaulay. The results of the system were more creditable to the

**Close Boroughs.**

quality of the British aristocracy than to the machinery of the British Constitution; yet we can hardly wonder that the presence of a few men of genius and industry at the head of affairs postponed and retarded the cause of reform. The Napoleonic wars were the golden age of these Imperial statesmen, who, highly educated and living apart, while they regarded the aristocrats with gratitude as their early patrons, and with indulgence as their intellectual inferiors, naturally despised the middle and



THE FOURTH DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.
(*From the Portrait by H. W. Pickersgill, R.A.*)

neglected the lower classes. Such contempt and neglect were only safe or possible while the nation was distracted from its domestic cares and grievances by the fear of a foreign invasion. So long as there were battles, statesmen might forget the price of bread. A diplomatic despatch was all important. A poor law commission was unnecessary; local government beneath their notice. "A mob might be massacred without deeply exciting their sympathy; but the loss of a great general or a great statesman they felt as a national calamity." *

The rotten borough system, the *curiosa felicitas* of the old British

* Bulwer's "Historical Characters," vol. ii., p. 209.

constitution, was regarded with affection by Mr. Gladstone even in his later years. Doyle records how on one occasion, as they were driving back from Chester to Hawarden, he made the remark: "If you are so anxious to have young men in the House of Commons, why did you Liberals abolish the rotten boroughs?" Mr. Gladstone answered warmly: "What do you mean? Why, I was the last man in either House of Parliament who ventured to utter a word in their behalf." Certainly something has been lost, as something always is lost, in the processes of political reconstruction. "We shall get no more Burkes, Pitts, and Foxes, and Horners, and Cannings, and Mackintoshes, Macaulays and Gladstones into the House of Commons along that covered way," is Doyle's doleful reflection; and more than twenty years after the passing of the Reform Bill Frederic Elliot spoke in a similar vein. "Under the old system," he said, "politics was a profession. Young men were taken up by patrons of boroughs and brought early into public life. *Now* there are not ten seats, perhaps not five, into which a public-spirited patron can put a promising young friend." He admitted that for legislative purposes the Reformed House was better than the old. But it was more difficult, he thought, to get good administrators and Ministers. The new type of member was a man of increasing income and declining years—"great land-owners or manufacturers, or the people who have banking-houses in a borough, or villas with little parks and clipped hedges near one, and who had not taken to politics, except parish politics, till they were forty or fifty."

Mr. Gladstone's entry into Parliament was a happy mixture of the old and the new system. In his own words he was not "nominated" but "recommended."

Gibbon tells how, when he was destroying—on paper—an army of barbarians, Sir Gilbert Elliot called to offer him a seat in Parliament. Macaulay found a nomination for a nomination borough enclosed in a letter. Even the Reform Bill did not quite drive this romantic element from English politics; for it was only a few months after being sent abroad by his father, in order that he might be equipped with the modern as well as the ancient weapons of political warfare, that Mr. Gladstone was summoned from Milan by the fourth Duke of Newcastle, a man of immense energy and iron resolution—blessed, moreover, with enough intellect to realise that God had granted him with the lordship of land the absolute ownership of every thing and person that lived or grew upon it. It happened that among his other territorial inheritances was the royal borough of Newark, a great part of which he held from the Crown. Until 1829 two Tory members nominated by the Duke had been returned with mechanical loyalty by a subservient tenantry. But at a bye-election in 1829, Serjeant Wilde, the Whig candidate, secured an unpleasantly large vote; and forty tenants who had supported Wilde received notices to quit immediately after the election. One of them explained that he had voted by mistake; "Then the notice to quit is a mistake," was the ducal answer. But the remainder were left to reflect upon the material disadvantages of carrying their politics to the polling booth. An indignation meeting was held and a petition sent to Parliament; but the

Newark-upon-Trent.

only reply extracted from the Duke was that "he had a right to do as he liked with his own." The words became proverbial, and were used effectively by the Whigs, not only in Newark—where Wilde was returned at the head of the poll in 1831—but all over the country.

Indeed, the Duke was more remarkable for his morals than for his intellectuals, and for his private virtues than for his public services—unless we include those unintentional benefactions which extreme bigotry frequently renders to the cause of progress. Nassau Senior tells how, on one occasion, Sugden, when he was Lord Chancellor, had to reply to the Duke of Newcastle. Sugden was annoyed with the Duke for having spoken of him persistently as a lawyer. "I do not understand," he said, "why the noble Duke is constantly calling me a 'lawyer.' I have never called him a statesman."

The Duke Newcastle.

But the Duke had no thought of bowing to the popular storm or of neglecting Newark because Newark had strayed for a year from his political guidance. Accordingly, when Mr. Gladstone began his first political campaign, the whole influence of Clumber * was at his back. He did not at once visit Newark, but, leaving Milan in July, reached London in time to issue his first address to the electors on the 4th of August, 1832. This interesting document ran as follows :—

"GENTLEMEN,—Induced by the most flattering assurances of support, I venture to offer myself as a Candidate for the high honour of representing you in the ensuing Parliament.

"It has been recommended to me to avoid introducing excitement in the town by a personal canvass at this early period, unless the example of any other Candidate should render it necessary. Let me, however, briefly express, as my claims on your confidence and favour, a warm and conscientious attachment to our Government as a limited Monarchy, and to the Union of our Church and State, as having been to us the source of numberless blessings, and as most strictly adapted to a Christian Nation. I consider that this attachment itself involves the strongest obligation, both to secure the removal of real abuses, and to resist the imputation of those which are imaginary.

Mr. Gladstone's Election Address, 1832.

"I admit facts, and abstract principles only in subservience to facts, as the true standard of Agricultural, Commercial, and Financial Legislation, and recognise the sedulous promotion of British interests as its first and most proper object. The alleviation of the public burdens consistently with the strict adherence to our national engagements—the defence, in particular, of our Irish Establishments—the amelioration of the condition of the labouring Classes—the adjustment of our Colonial Interests, with measures for the moral advancement and further legal protection of our fellow-subjects in slavery—and the observance of a dignified and impartial Foreign policy—are objects, for the attainment of which, should it be your pleasure to return me to Parliament, I hope to labour with honesty, diligence, and perseverance—recognising no interests but those which are truly national.

"When the proper time shall be considered to have arrived, it will be alike my duty and pleasure to enter into the most unreserved personal communications, conscious as I am that they form the only satisfactory basis of mutual confidence.

"I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your obedient and faithful servant, W. E. GLADSTONE."

Mr. Gladstone was proscribed by the committee of the Anti-slavery Society as one of those candidates "whose past conduct or present professions or admitted personal interests in the question left the committee

* The ducal seat—not many miles from Newark.

without hope that they would support immediate abolition." Shortly afterwards the two old members, Wilde (Whig) and Handley (Tory) appeared on the scene, and Mr. Gladstone followed immediately. He has left us two accounts of his arrival. In one of them, communicated to Mr. Cornelius Brown for the "Annals of Newark," he says that he "arrived at Newark after a journey of forty hours from Torquay, at midnight, on Monday, 24th September, 1832, an absolute personal stranger, aged twenty-two. Next morning I set forth on my canvass, with band, flags, and badges

Arrival at Newark.

THE "CLINTON ARMS," NEWARK, IN 1832.

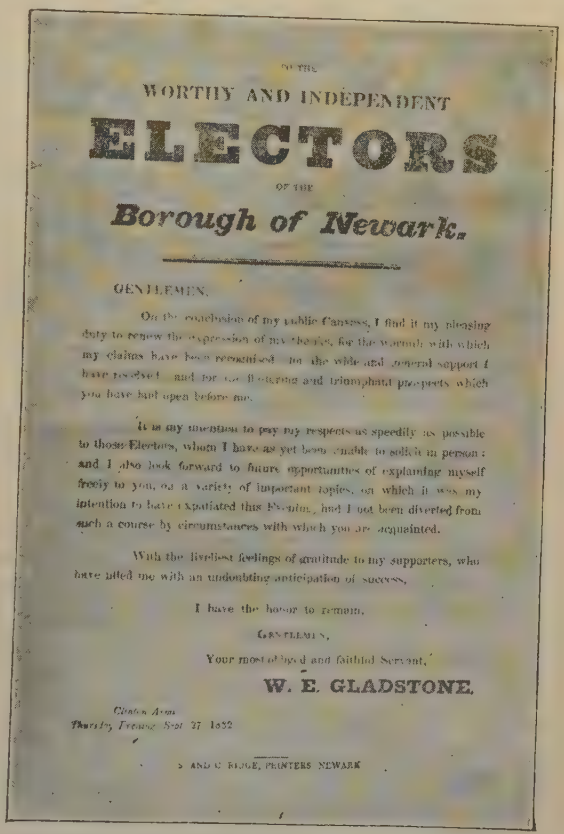
of every kind, and perhaps a thousand people. The constituency was, I think, 1,570 in number, and the Duke's tenants rather under one-fourth. But his influence was my sole recommendation. It was, however, an arduous contest, extending, with intermissions, over three months. The canvass was old-fashioned and thorough. We went into every house, be it what it might. Even paupers were asked for their influence. 'Oh, sir!' replied one old woman, 'my influence is but very shallow.' A clergyman, recently come, entered another old woman's house with a memorandum book, which happened to be red. 'God bless you, sir, she cried; 'I wish you success.'"

There was an idea among young Radicals like Roebuck, who was standing for Bath, that personal canvass was undemocratic; but we do not hear that Serjeant Wilde put that doctrine into practice. Newark was hardly a suitable place for experiments in political idealism. In another

letter, written in December, 1875, to a Mr. Gadley, one of his old Newark supporters, Mr. Gladstone said:—

"I remember, as if it were yesterday, my first arrival in the place, at midnight, by the Highflyer coach, in August or September, 1832, after a journey of forty hours from Torquay, of which we thought nothing in those days. Next morning at eight o'clock we sallied forth from the Clinton Arms to begin a canvass, on which I now look back as the most exciting period of my life. I never worked harder or slept so badly, that is to say, so little."

Meanwhile, if the Whig newspapers are to be trusted, the Clumber influence was hard at work. A Whig butler and two Whig workmen had been discharged "because they would not vote for Mr. Gladstone, the slavery man." But these and many other instances, which might be collected from the local organs, were no doubt indignantly repudiated; for Mr. Gladstone was very proud of his first constituency. "It was not," he said long afterwards, in his argument for the county franchise, "the love of equality which induced the working men of England to struggle with all their might in 1831–2 for a Reform Act, which not only, as they knew full well, did not confer the vote upon their class at large, but which provided for the extinction of the truly popular franchises theretofore existing in Preston, in Newark and in many other places." Speaking in London on May 31st, 1892, Mr. Gladstone described the Newark of sixty years before as "a scot and lot borough, in which, as nearly as may be, the principle of household suffrage existed."



TO THE

WORTHY AND INDEPENDENT

ELECTORS

OF THE

Borough of Newark.

GENTLEMEN,

On the conclusion of my public canvass, I find it my pleasing duty to renew the expression of my thanks, for the warmth with which my claims have been remembered, for the wide and general support I have received, and for the flattering and triumphant prospects which you have laid open before me.

It is my intention to pay my respects as speedily as possible to those Electors, whom I have as yet been unable to solicit in person: and I also look forward to future opportunities of explaining myself freely to you, on a variety of important topics, on which it was my intention to have expatiated this Election, had I not been diverted from such a course by circumstances with which you are acquainted.

With the liveliest feelings of gratitude to my supporters, who have filled me with an undoubting anticipation of success,

I have the honour to remain,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obliged and faithful Servant,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Clinton Arms
Thursday Evening Sept 27 1832

[illegible] AND C. RIDGE, PRINTERS NEWARK

REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF MR. GLADSTONE'S LETTER OF THANKS TO THE NEWARK ELECTORS, 1832.

On the 8th of October, 1832, he made his first speech to the Red Club, and on the following day issued his second address "to the worthy and independent electors of the borough of Newark." Lord Lincoln had already issued one of a similar character "to the gentry, clergy and electors of South Nottinghamshire"—"a style significant of

much," as Mr. Robbins* justly remarks. The earlier paragraphs of this second address are chiefly noteworthy for the retrospective attack on the Reform Bill and the suggestion that its evils should be mitigated by increasing the religious and social activities of the State. The second half — which does not merit quotation — consists of an elaborate reply to the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, in the course of which, after supporting from Scripture his view that moral should precede physical emancipation, he earnestly trusts that "with the utmost speed which prudence will admit, we shall arrive at that exceedingly desirable consummation, the utter extinction of slavery." The manifesto is headed, "Clinton Arms, Newark, Tuesday, Oct. 9th, 1832," and begins thus:—

A Second Address.

"GENTLEMEN,—Having now completed my canvass, I think it my duty as well to remind you of the principle on which I have solicited your votes, as freely to assure my friends that its result has placed my success beyond a doubt.

"I have not requested your favour on the ground of adherence to the opinions of any man or party, further than such adherence can be fairly understood from the conviction I have not hesitated to avow, that we must watch and resist that unenquiring and undiscriminating desire for change amongst us, which threatens to produce, along with partial good, a melancholy preponderance of mischief; which, I am persuaded, would aggravate beyond computation the deep-seated evils of our social state, and the heavy burthens of our industrious classes; which, by disturbing our peace, destroys confidence, and strikes at the root of prosperity. Thus it *has done already;* and thus, we must therefore believe, it *will do.*

"For the mitigation of those evils we must, I think, look not only to particular measures, but to the restoration of sounder general principles. I mean especially that principle, on which alone the incorporation of Religion with the State, in our Constitution, can be defended; that the duties of Governors are strictly and peculiarly religious; and that Legislatures, like Individuals, are bound to carry throughout their acts the spirit of the high truths they have acknowledged. Principles are now arrayed against our institutions; and not by truckling nor by temporising — not by oppression nor corruption—but by principles they must be met.

"Among their first results should be, a sedulous and special attention to the interests of the poor, founded upon the rule, that those who are the least able to take care of themselves should be most regarded by others. Particularly it is a duty to endeavour by every means that *labour may receive adequate remuneration;* which, unhappily, among several classes of our fellow-countrymen, is not now the case. Whatever measures, therefore, whether by correction of the Poor Laws, allotment of Cottage Grounds, or otherwise, tend to promote this object, I deem entitled to the warmest support; with all such as are calculated to secure sound moral conduct in any class of society.

Mr. Brown, the historian of Newark, received a letter from Mr. Gladstone in which the veteran statesman admitted that his first programme "certainly justified criticism," being that of "a warm and loyal Tory who was quite unaware that it contained in it the seeds of change to come." Among other criticisms to which it was subjected was that of the Duke of Newcastle. "I remember," wrote Mr. Gladstone, "that the Duke, a singularly kind, honourable, and high-minded man, questioned me a little about the passage on the wages of labour, which seemed somewhat to startle him. But he was far too delicately considerate to interfere."

The Labour Question.

Mr. Gladstone's interest in allotments continued; for in 1835 (August 10th)

*In "The Early Public Life of William Ewart Gladstone," a work marked throughout by accuracy and research.

we find him presenting a petition to the House of Commons from the inhabitants of Stradbroke "complaining of distress and praying for the allotment of small portions of land for the poor."

On December 4th, 1832, the Tory ladies of Newark presented a flag to the Red Club, at the same time congratulating them upon having secured for their candidate a gentleman with "high mental endowments and excellency of heart." Mr. Gladstone made a graceful reply, in which he succeeded, as so many candidates have done both before and since, in identifying his own party—the Red Party—with the British flag, which had ever been the "symbol of national moderation and national power." The nomination took place on December 10th. Mr. Gladstone, who was put forward by the chairman of the Red Club, was severely heckled. A Mr. Gillson inquired whether he was not the Duke of Newcastle's nominee. But the dialectical training which Oxford affords stood the candidate in good stead. Mr. Gladstone wished to have Mr. Gillson's definition of the term "nominee," and then he would answer.

**A Heckling.**

Mr. Gillson said he meant a person sent by the Duke of Newcastle to be pushed down the electors' throats, whether they would or not.

Mr. Gladstone replied, then according to that definition he was not a nominee. He came to Newark by the invitation of the Red Club, than whom none were more respectable and intelligent. The Club sent to the Duke of Newcastle to know if he could recommend a candidate to them, and in consequence he was appealed to, and accepted the Club's invitation.

He was, however, the real if not the technical nominee; so much is proved by the remarkable contrast between the results of the show of hands and the poll. At the former he was easily beaten by both Wilde and Handley. But at the end of the two days' polling (December 11th and 12th) Mr. Gladstone came out head, with 887 votes; Handley second, with 798; and Wilde last, with 726. At the end of the first day's polling, when the two Tory candidates had secured a substantial lead, Mr. Gladstone experienced one of the pleasantries which were incidental to elections in days when education and philanthropy were even more restricted than the franchise:—

**The Polling.**

"In pitch dark I spoke to a friendly crowd out of the window of my sitting-room in the Clinton Arms. A man on the outer line of the crowd flung at me a stone nearly the size of an egg, which entered the window within a foot of my head. He was seen and laid hold on. I understood at the time that he arranged the matter by voting for me on the next day."

This was not so bad as the *paving stone* intended for his head, which William Windham, the great cricketer and statesman, "fielded" when he was being chaired after election through the streets of Norwich. In that case, however, the ruffian, who could not assist with his vote, was "pummelled within an inch of his life."

The *Times* and other Whig organs were much annoyed at this return of Newark to "the nomination of the Duke of Newcastle, or, to use the language of the Red Club, the recommendation of his Grace." The *Reflector*, a London weekly print, laboured to be picturesque:—

**Whig Comments on the Election.**

"The Duke nodded unto Newark, and Newark sent back the man, or rather the boy, of his choice. . . . The voters for Gladstone went up to that candidate's booth (the slave

driver, as they called him) with Wilde's colours. People who had on former occasions voted for Wilde, and were about to vote against him, said on being asked to give their suffrage, 'We cannot, we dare not. We have lost half our business, and we shall lose the rest, if we go against the Duke. We would do anything in our power for Serjeant Wilde, and the cause: but we cannot starve!' Now, what say ye, our merry men, touching the ballot?"

But the ballot could hardly be hoped for in the lifetime of the *Reflector*.

**The Tory Rout in the Country.**

There were not many Newcastles, however, nor many Newarks, in the General Election of 1832. It was only the leadership of Peel, and the shifting affections or animosities of O'Connell and his Irish contingent, which prevented the Tory minority from being utterly contemptible in the new Parliament. On December 21st Frederic Rogers (afterwards Lord Blachford) wrote to Newman:—

"The Elections, as I suppose you will see by the papers, are dreadful—the Tories beaten everywhere—*e.g.* Hampshire returns four Whigs—Pusey is thrown out for Berkshire—Sadler for Leeds, Wetherall for Oxford, etc. etc. (though, on the other hand, Manners Sutton is returned for Cambridge University, and Sir R. Vyvyan for Bristol, and Gladstone turns out Wilde for Newark). Cobbett and Gully are likewise among our legislators."

**The New House of Commons, 1833.**

Sadler, one of the Duke of Newcastle's old "nominees," had been thrown out at Leeds by Macaulay and Marshall. Gully has been described as "the ex-prizefighter, the honourable member for Pontefract." But he proved to be "silent, respectable, and inoffensive." Cobbett, terrible author of the "Legacy to Parsons," who had corrected the grammar of Ministers and bishops, and had treated mob, Parliament, and den of thieves as synonymous terms, proved to be by no means so formidable or so liberal as his friends had hoped and his enemies feared. Thomas Attwood—who had organised the unions for war in case the rush on the banks for gold had not "stopped the Duke" and saved the Reform Bill—now entered the House as member for Birmingham. But after a maiden speech, in which he gave utterance "to some commonplace remarks, clothed in a somewhat strange phraseology, and delivered in a strong Warwickshire accent," he also relapsed into insignificance. The truth is that the system which was introduced by the Reform Bill and gradually actualised had not reconstituted the *personnel* of the House of Commons. But there was a new spirit. Constituents were substituted for patrons; and Mr. Gladstone lived to see a House of Commons richer and duller, but infinitely more democratic, infinitely more industrious, and infinitely more useful than that which preceded the days of the Reformers. A plutocrat still buys his seat, and probably pays as much for it as ever. But the purchase money, instead of being paid over to a single individual, is distributed in "subscriptions," and happily does not carry with it anything like complete irresponsibility in the lobby.

So far, then, as the membership of the new House of Commons was concerned, there was no very marked change in type. The influence of money invested in business was increased as compared with that of money invested in land; but the prophecy that men of rank and

THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(*From the Aquatint by Rowlandson and Pugin*, 1809.)

consideration would withdraw from public life after the passing of the Reform Bill was completely refuted. The new Government (Earl Grey's) was almost entirely composed of the Whig aristocracy. Lord Althorp had sacrificed the supervision of his stables to the leadership of the House, and felt the sacrifice keenly. Neither titles nor talent had been extinguished with the rotten boroughs. The names of Macaulay, Molesworth, Grote, Bulwer, and Praed proved that the new constituencies had no constitutional objection to literature. The names of Stanley, Peel, Russell, Palmerston, and O'Connell were a sufficient guarantee that Parliamentary oratory was not yet on the decline.

A Government of Whig Aristocrats.

If the members, with a few noticeable but unimportant exceptions, were drawn from the same strata of society as those who had listened to Pitt and Fox, to Brougham and Canning, neither was there any change of environment. The old House of Commons was not burnt down until two years after Mr. Gladstone entered Parliament. Not only had the new wine been poured into old bottles, but the old bottles had been stored in the old cellar; and a strange place it was. Perhaps the most suggestive of later descriptions is that of Samuel Bamford, a Lancashire working man (an ardent Reformer and versifier), who visited it in the previous decade during the debate on the report of the Green Bag Committee. He could not look with favourable eyes upon the "pit-looking place," on each side of which were seated "some three or four hundreds of the most ordinary-looking men I had ever beheld at one view." There were, indeed, striking exceptions; and he particularises Canning and Castlereagh, Burdett and Brougham; but the predominant feelings in the mind of this typical representative of the classes outside the pale were hatred and contempt for the "borough-mongering crew." Brougham was attacking the Government. His friends were few and far between, and his voice was drowned "by a howl as wild and remorseless as that from a kennel of hounds at feeding time." We can imagine the excitement with which the uncitizened citizen of the North looked down from the small gallery which he had gained, "after a tough struggle at elbowing and pushing along a passage, up a narrow staircase and across a room," upon the collective, nominated wisdom of the nation — sitting, standing, lounging, talking, laughing, coughing — in the dimly-lighted place, "or rather den," below. "Some called 'Order, order!' some 'Question, question'; some beat time with the heel of their boots; some snorted into their napkins; and one old gentleman in the side gallery actually coughed himself from a mock cough into a real one, and could not stop until he was almost black in the face." According to Roebuck, the manners of the Reformed Parliament were far worse than those of its predecessors. But it seems more probable that they were somewhat better; and, in the absence of other evidence, Roebuck's assertions offer a presumption in favour of their contraries.

The Old St. Stephen's.

But what of the political complexion of the House in which the member for Newark now found himself? The old Whig party has been ingeniously defined as "a combination of more or less intelligent noblemen of liberal ideas and aims, who chose such men as Burke and Brougham and Hume, and at last Macaulay, to develop those ideas and to help to

attain those aims." Mr. Gladstone himself was never a Whig; Whiggism was not a stepping-stone from Toryism to Liberalism. The Whig was a variety of the Liberal species marked by a strong dislike for the Church militant and by rigid, dogmatic consistency. He had advocated and carried franchise reform in the belief—a belief fully justified by the event—that it would be possible to free the Civil Service from jobbery and corruption by making the heads of the departments responsible to a large middle-class constituency. Moreover, "as a rule a man not born a Liberal may become a Liberal; but to be a Whig he must be a born Whig."* Whiggism.

Mr. Gladstone entered Parliament as the hereditary opponent of Whiggism, with plenty of obstinacy and prejudice, "and a fine fund of high, chivalrous Tory sentiment, and a tongue, moreover, to set it loose with." So wrote his friend Arthur Hallam, at the time of the Newark election. On the 25th of January, 1833, Mr. Gladstone was admitted as a student to Lincoln's Inn. (Disraeli, after keeping a few terms, had taken his name off the books more than a year before.) Four days later the first Reformed Parliament was opened. Inveterate and recrudescent error† ascribes to William Ewart, with suitable quotations and comment, a speech delivered by his brother Thomas on May 17th, 1833. The mistake would not have occurred if writers had consulted the *Mirror of Parliament*, a competitor of Hansard in the 'thirties which is far more trustworthy and complete, particularly for the speeches of the lesser men. That Mr. Gladstone much preferred the *Mirror* as an authority for his earlier speeches will not be surprising to anyone who has compared its accounts with the corresponding passages in Hansard. According to the *Mirror*, which alone seems to have been able from the very first to distinguish between the two brothers, Mr. Gladstone spoke first on a petition against the return of Viscount Sandon for Liverpool. That city was remarkable for the munificence and liberality—invariably regarded by beaten candidates as bribery and corruption—of the committees which controlled municipal and Parliamentary elections. These practices had reached a climax in the bye-election of November, 1830, when a vacancy had been created by Huskisson's death. Mr. Gladstone had himself described it in a letter written from Leamington to Charles Wordsworth, December 28th, 1830:— A Liverpool Election.

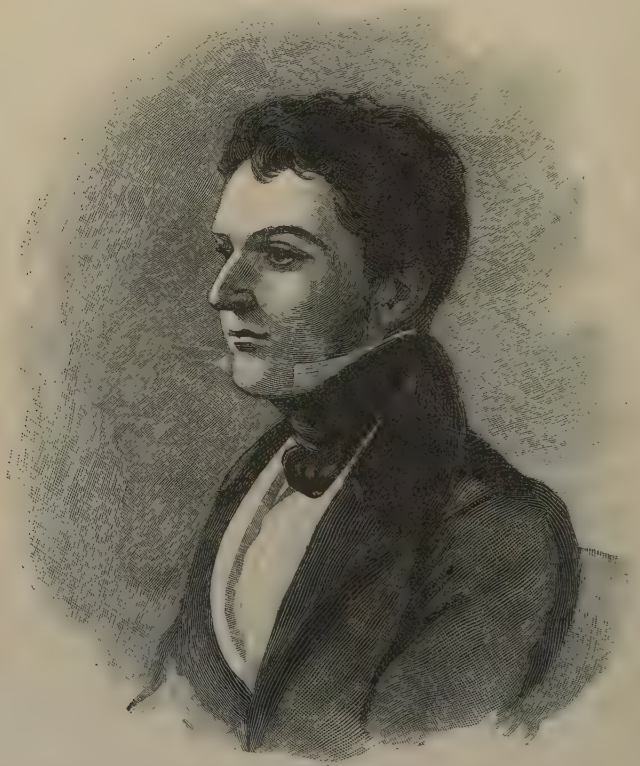
"Since I came here I have heard a good deal of that sorry business, the Liverpool election, from one of my brothers, who resides there and took part in it. He declined having anything to do with the expenditure during the contest, and so had no direct access to knowledge of the amount disbursed. The current rumour is that Ewart's expenses are £36,000 and Denison's £46,000; but my brother says Ewart's are the greater of the two, and he knows Denison's to be £41,000. Ewart's party have had no public subscription opened, and are, therefore, at liberty to call their expenses what they choose; but Denison's are necessarily revealed. About £19,000 has been subscribed for him. The election, they say, is absolutely *certain* to be set aside, and Denison will, probably, come in on the next opening. There is an idea, however, that the writ may be suspended and Liverpool remain with only one member."

For a long time this inquiry was postponed in the agitation for the

* "Gleanings," vol. ii., p. 288.

† Hansard, where the error originates, gives the speech to William *C.* Gladstone.

great Reform Bill. But at last, on February 21st, 1833, a petition was presented to the House of Commons by John Benett. The petition was signed by "3,010 of the most respectable inhabitants of Liverpool." It complained not only of Parliamentary elections, but also of the manner in which the municipal elections were conducted. The petitioners "had hoped the Reform Bill would have effected a corresponding reform in the town of Liverpool, by leaving it as open to fair and honourable



MR. GLADSTONE AT THE TIME HE ENTERED PARLIAMENT.
(*From the Painting by Sir George Hayter at Fasque.*)

contests as any other town;" but in this hope they had been "utterly disappointed." Mr. Benett had tried twice before to disfranchise the Liverpudlian freemen. "Upon a former occasion I offered to prove, at the Bar of this House, that upwards of 3,000 of the freemen of the town of Liverpool had been bribed; and I can now reassert this with much greater confidence. That confidence again is much increased by the signatures of 3,010 such respectable inhabitants to the allegations contained in the petition. I say I have seen the parties who can prove the charges; and that the books are now extant which will bring home the case." Viscount Sandon pleaded that corruption had gone unimpeached before: why then this ungentlemanly attempt to unseat

him just because he was a Tory? "He would not deny that some indiscreet friend may have given a glass of ale," but he was certain that his committee had not been guilty of bribery. In short, the shower in which he had descended on the electorate might have been maltiferous but certainly was not auriferous. But this apologetic manner failed to propitiate a Radical member, Rigby Wason by name. Wason maintained that "upon the occasion of the last election, a drunken freeman was carried on the coach box of the noble lord's carriage, the noble lord himself being inside; and that at the polling booth, the deputy of the returning officer refused to take the votes of many of the freemen

CLUB HOUSES IN PALL MALL EARLY IN THE 'FORTIES.

(*From a Drawing by T. Schotter Boys.*)

because they were in such a beastly state of intoxication. The candidate who was opposed to the noble lord polled 600 votes ahead of him in the first day; and I will ask how will the noble lord account for the circumstance of his having been returned ultimately by a majority of 145? Will he say that the freemen did not hold back till the last day, with a view to make their vote so much the more valuable?" The student of electoral history will notice that no attempt was made to controvert these charges either by Viscount Sandon or his friends. The *Mirror* does not suggest that the House manifested either surprise or indignation. These were every-day occurrences—neither *anomalies* nor *grievances*. But Mr. W. E. Gladstone is reported by the *Mirror* to have come to the rescue of the Viscount:—

"As I am aware that the assertions made by a successful candidate, as to the purity of his supporters, are always received with due caution by this House, I am happy to have it in my power to bear testimony to the truth of what has been stated by my noble friend. I happen to be in possession of the whole amount of the expenses incurred at the last election of the noble lord; and I feel confident that if the statement were submitted to this House, not one of its members would leave it without being satisfied that, after defraying the legal expenses, nothing could be left for corrupt practices. I am far from impugning the respectability of the individuals who have signed the petition now offered to the House; but I do think it most unfair that, after they have shrunk away from their first intention of attacking the seat of the noble lord, they should bring such allegations against him and his supporters as those contained in this petition. The honourable member who has just sat down complains of the noble lord because his constituents are perhaps not quite so sober as those of the seat of purity he represents. We have heard a good deal of the effects expected to be produced upon the old constituency of Liverpool by the Reform Bill—that cure for all our grievances. Now, Sir, what are the facts? I can state on the authority of a high corporate officer that at the recent election more than one-half of the old freemen registered as householders, and fully two-thirds might have so registered. So much for the effects of the Reform Bill.

Mr. Gladstone's Maiden Speech, 1833.

"There is another important consideration connected with the prayer of this petition, and that is the injustice which would be inflicted upon the hundreds of persons admitted to their freedom since the notorious election of November, 1830. I must protest against the unfairness of the whole of this proceeding, and particularly against the manner in which the allegations contained in the petition are made against the noble lord."

Though Mr. Gladstone himself is said to have fancied that the speech made on June 3rd was his maiden speech, it seems difficult to set aside the above, considering the excellent authority of the *Mirror* and the internal evidence. The sneer at the "seat of purity" is in his earlier style; but the side thrust at the Reform Bill and the refusal to follow Viscount Sandon in his attack on the probity of the petitioners are eminently characteristic. So, too, is the financial argument as to the want of margin for corruption after deducting "legal expenses." And lastly, it is impossible to suppose that a young member should have allowed a maiden speech for which he was not responsible to have been appended to his name in the leading report of Parliamentary proceedings. The speech created no interest at the time. Mr. Robbins has collated the newspapers of the day. According to the *Sun*, the member for Newark spoke "under the gallery, and was almost entirely inaudible in the gallery"; and the *Times* said: "Mr. Gladstone made a few remarks which were not audible in the gallery."

On March 6th Mr. Gladstone was elected to the Carlton Club, of which he remained a member until 1859. The old club-house is shown in the foreground (on the extreme right) of the view on the preceding page.

On May 14th, 1833, Mr. Gladstone's name is recorded among those of a number of members who presented petitions for the abolition of slavery. There were several hundred petitions in all presented on this one day upon this one subject. The last, a petition "from the females of Great Britain," was presented by Mr. Fowell Buxton, who had to consult the Speaker "as to the manner in which I am to get it on to the table; for it is so heavy that I really am unable to carry it." This monster petition was finally hoisted, with the help of three other members, on to the table of the House, where it was "ordered to lie" along with the others. On

Slavery.

May 21st "Mr. William Gladstone" showed his impartiality by presenting another petition, this time from the inhabitants of the city of Edinburgh, "against the immediate abolition of slavery."

On June 3rd the House was in Committee to consider the resolutions which Stanley, the Colonial Secretary, introduced with a view to the emancipation of the West Indian slaves. The original proposal of a loan of fifteen millions had now been converted into a gift of twenty millions as compensation to the planters.

But this alteration did not absolve the member for Newark from the duty of defending his father, who had been fiercely attacked by Lord Howick, the eldest son of the Prime Minister, for the management of a plantation called Vreed-en-Hoop. Rising from a bench behind Peel he began as follows:—

Defence of Mr. Gladstone's Father.

"I am aware that I ought to apologise to the Committee for intruding upon them the opinions of an utterly inexperienced person, when they are engaged in the discussion of a question as extensive and as complicated as any that ever came before Parliament. But having a deep, though indirect, pecuniary interest in it, and, if I may say so much without exciting suspicion, a still deeper interest in it as a question of justice, of humanity, and of religion, I venture to offer myself for a short time, and I trust it will be but for a very short time, to your notice. I have, however, Sir, an additional reason for so doing, inasmuch as the noble lord (Howick), the late Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was pleased to adduce in proof of a theory which he held calculations drawn from an estate belonging to my father, which calculations conveyed imputations of no light or ordinary character." [The noble lord's "theory" was this: that there was an inseparable connection between the three following circumstances: increase of sugar, increase of labour and punishment, and decrease of human life!] "I cannot refrain from telling the noble lord—I trust in all good humour—(I will not say, telling the noble lord, because I would rather appeal to the feelings of the House to determine whether I am right or wrong—but I will say that my idea is)—that if I had charges of this grave nature to bring forward, charges materially affecting private character, in a case where the party attacked had two sons sitting in the Assembly where those charges were to be made, I ought to have given them notice of my intention; which, however, the noble lord did not deign to do. For, Sir, these charges do affect private character. If I am proprietor of an estate in the West Indies, and continually receive from thence accounts of increasing crops and decreasing population, without inquiry and without endeavouring to prevent the continuance of such a system, no man will tell me that my character does not suffer, and ought not to suffer, for such monstrous inhumanity."

Mr. Gladstone then proceeded to details; and as this earliest effort of his lucid and convincing style of exposition is only accessible in the *Mirror of Parliament*, it seems desirable to cite at any rate the first head of his argument:—

"Now, Sir, the noble lord stated that there was a decrease upon the estate of Vreed-en-Hoop, in Demerara, belonging to my father, of eighty-one persons in three years, upon a population of 550, amounting to above fourteen per cent., while 600 hogsheads of sugar were produced annually. I begin by admitting the fact. I have not the smallest sensation of shame, though perhaps some may think I ought to have, in making the admission. Reasoning on information such as has been given me, I do not feel that there is any truth in the inferences of the noble lord, and it is now my business to account to the House for the facts. The noble lord laid down as his rule, that the quantity of sugar produced varied, directly, as the quantity of labour and punishment, and inversely as the quantity of human life. Now I give the noble lord an instance of an estate, in the immediate vicinity of that he quoted, and of the circumstances of which he, having had access to official documents, ought, I think, to have been aware, where the decrease of the slave population was extremely small, amounting to almost nothing;

whereas the quantity of sugar produced was very far greater than on the estate of Vreed-en-Hoop. On the estate of Mon Repos, Sir, with a gang of 470 persons (much smaller than that on the estate of Vreed-en-Hoop) there were 900 hogsheads of sugar produced annually, on an average of the five years from 1827 to 1832. The entire decrease of population there during the whole of this period amounted to ten lives, or less, being for three years two per cent., instead of above fourteen per cent. So much for the exactitude of the noble lord's rule! I am very sorry to detain the Committee with these particulars, but though this is of the nature of a private question, still they bear with great force on the general question of sugar cultivation. I proceed to give the true cause of these numerous deaths. About six years ago, when the estate of Vreed-en-Hoop had come into my father's possession, out of 550 slaves no less than 140 were aged and infirm persons."

Lord Howick at this point interjected a hostile "Hear, hear!" which Mr. Gladstone thus noticed:—

"I, of course, take my information as it is sent from the property, and I find, thereby, that there were 140 aged persons and invalids. Perhaps the noble lord will say: 'Oh, but this only goes to prove the fact that the people had become infirm in consequence of the large previous production of sugar on that estate.' No such thing, Sir. In the year 1826 the crops, I find, were exceedingly small; they amounted only to 257 hogsheads of sugar for 370 persons, which gives an average of 1,100 to 1,200 pounds for each slave, the very quantity quoted by the noble lord in the case of Anna Regina as an example of a small production."

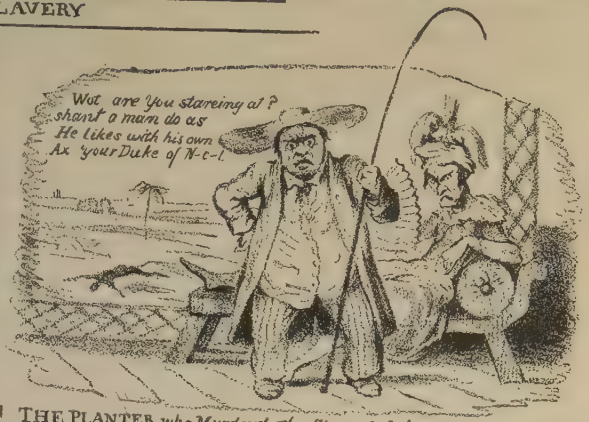
But Mr. Gladstone had not yet done with his argument. There were some other cases which he must produce at the risk of "wearying the House." Mr. Buxton had said, "Give me the quantity of sugar and I will give you the decrease of life." "I will apply this theorem," retorted Mr. Gladstone, "to a particular case. In St. Vincent's there is an increase of 122 persons in, I think, twelve years; in Santa Lucia there is a decrease of 1,962. Well, in Santa Lucia the produce of sugar has been 6¼ cwt. per man; how much ought that in St. Vincent's to be? I have not worked out the problem, but the answer, I know, according to the rule, would be very different indeed from the fact, which gives no less than 10½ cwt. per man."

Dean Liddell once said that Gladstone and his contemporaries spent a great deal of time over the Rhetoric of Aristotle—a subject upon which, as we have seen, Biscoe gave excellent lectures at that time to the undergraduates of Christchurch—but little or none upon the Organon. But it must be admitted that in this speech Mr. Gladstone was logical as well as plausible. Already at the age of twenty-three he possessed that almost magical power over figures which has been the wonder of public audiences and Parliaments, of State departments and private secretaries. It might be objected that these minute calculations argue a certain lack of humanity. But when Mr. Gladstone came to the charges of cruelty he showed that his sympathies were broad and true. His heart, though not yet fully instructed, was in the right place:—"The honourable member for Lancaster made some statements as to the effects of particular trades in this country upon human life, which were perfectly astounding; and I have read others of a similar description from a scientific book on the subject, by a gentleman named Thackrah, which show that the extent of injury to human life from many of the most ordinary trades in this country is almost beyond belief, and far

**Sugar Growing compared with Other Trades.**

# COLONIAL SLAVERY

THE SLAVE




THE PLANTER who Murderd the Slave ! ! !

The GOVENOR sorry to punish the murdrers ! ! !

The M.P^s who approve of the GOVENOR

The ELECTORS who return the M.P ! ! !

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A CONTEMPORARY SKIT ON SLAVERY.

exceeding the effects of the cultivation of sugar, even if we were to take them as stated by the honourable member for Weymouth. I am unwilling to trouble the Committee with them, but I will just mention one case; it is that of the grinders. Those who use dry grindstones, it is stated, live only from twenty-eight to thirty-two years, while those who use wet ones survive, it is added, to between forty and fifty!" It was true, he admitted, that the best climates for producing sugar were generally the worst for human life and that many instances could be quoted in support of Buxton's generalisation; "but can they account in like manner for those cases which I produce against them? If they cannot, I submit that their rule falls to the ground, for unless it includes all cases it is valueless."

If Mr. Gladstone had seen a little more of the quicksands of political and economic data he would have shown less contempt for a rule or principle which was not rigidly exact or mathematically complete. But though the logician scouted "the rule" of his opponents, the rhetorician did not disdain a principle which seemed to offer support to his own case. This was "that manufacturing processes as a general rule are less favourable to life than those which are agricultural." And the generalisation was skilfully employed. "Now what does the honourable member for Weymouth do? He compares the case of sugar with the cases of cotton and coffee, but forgets to remind you that the production of sugar in the Colonies involves a manufacturing process, while the production of cotton and coffee is purely agricultural. Now, Sir, I beg the Committee to advert to the importance of these considerations upon sugar cultivation. Cases of cruelty have often been brought forward against the colonists; and I confess, Sir—with shame and pain I confess—that cases of wanton cruelty have existed; as well as that they always will exist, particularly under the system of slavery; and unquestionably this is a substantial reason why the British Legislature and the public should set themselves in good earnest to provide for its extinction." There follows, however, a passage in which Mr. Gladstone displayed a liberal as well as a bold spirit. He insisted, and quite fairly, that you cannot altogether distinguish between a system of slavery and a system of industrial freedom so far as dangerous trades are concerned. There are degrees of danger and degrees of legislative interference:—

> "It should be recollected that no two professions or trades in this country are in the same degree favourable to human life—it is entirely a question of degree—but still you do not relinquish the pursuit of any particular trade or profession, merely because it is less favourable to human life than another. If, indeed, the statements which we have heard were true, in anything at all like their full extent, I would say nothing on behalf of sugar cultivation; but then I observe that if the manufacture of sugar be so essentially and necessarily destructive, we ought not to stop till we have passed a law prohibiting the importation of sugar altogether."

**England and her Colonies.**

Mr. Gladstone hardly attempted to defend the planters against the charge of refusing to educate and Christianise their slaves; but he maintained that this was only a strong instance of a general rule, seeing that "the conduct of England to her colonial possessions — which constitute the main strength and the solid foundation of this great empire —nas been most defective as regards the propagation of Christianity."

Mr. Gladstone's view as to the value of our Colonies—at a time when they were widely regarded as an inconvenient appendage—was no doubt derived from Burke, and may be contrasted with that of Mr. Disraeli at a later date. It will be seen that his theories as to the duties of the mother country in regard to Christianity soon took practical shape in ardent advocacy of colonial bishoprics and the other appurtenances of an Established Church.

As for the scheme itself it was important to have the co-operation of the colonial legislatures:—"There was a much controverted question as to the tone adopted by the right honourable Secretary [Stanley] in his speech on these parts of the subject, he maintaining that it had been extremely mild, while the West Indians thought it rather otherwise; but I think this discussion has been set at rest by the praises which the honourable member for Weymouth bestowed upon the right honourable Secretary—for he kindly undertook the patronage of his statements, and said they consisted just of the same facts and arguments which he (Mr. Buxton) had all along been using. Of the intent of the right honourable Secretary to deal mildly with us I have no doubt; but I think he will admit that he was not quite so successful as is usual with him."

More carefully prepared or better reported, the above sentences would recall the ironies of Fielding. Mr. Gladstone never suffered from absolute want of humour, as his critics are so fond of asserting. True, there was little fun in his speeches, but that was for lack of time rather than of faculty. His thought was so strenuous, his material was so enormous, and his style so diffuse, that the lighter vein was only employed where it seemed indispensable.

**Mr. Gladstone's Humour.**

A witty sally was a *rara avis* even among the specimens of his earlier oratory; and on this occasion, too, he soon relapsed into the higher mood. Only a most mature and seasoned Socialist could better this naïve proposal that a human instinct should be implanted by enactment: "I do hope and trust that this House will earnestly strive to introduce into that plan some stimulus to competition among the slaves—to create in their minds a new principle in some degree adequate to the extraordinary emergency of their transition from a state of slavery to one of freedom, and providing for their spontaneous industry—a principle which can hardly be generally acquired in their present condition." The provision for spontaneous industry—a delicious suggestion—might, he continued, be partially incorporated in the scheme, by establishing a broad distinction between idle and industrious slaves, the latter to be freed as rapidly as possible, the former very gradually, if at all. Meanwhile, the greatest precaution should be taken against exasperating the colonials; and on this head Mr. Gladstone cleverly appealed to the manufacturers in a way which brings the speech into curiously close touch with the present day:—"You cannot by power overcome the sullenness, the indifference, the reluctance of the colonists abroad; you may carry your plan without bloodshed or violent opposition, but unless the colonists are with you, the continued cultivation of the Colonies, I think, is quite hopeless. It would be presumption on my part to remind the House of the extreme

**The Colonies to be Conciliated.**

importance of continuing that cultivation, as at all times, so more particularly now, when rival manufacturers are rapidly springing up among the Continental nations, and excluding us one by one from their markets, so that it is principally to our Colonies that we must look for a certain consumption of our goods."

"Particularly now!" And sixty-five years afterwards the cry was still "particularly now," the same cry which Mr. Gladstone lived to combat so strenuously, whether it was used as an argument for fair trade, or exclusive dealing, or increased armaments. Strange that a big dole to the planters and a commercial union with the Colonies should have been two planks in the platform of the member for Newark in 1833! Strange, too, that, in spite of this and more recent prophecies, the English Colonies are not increasing their fraction of the total volume of English trade!

**A Disquisition on Property.**

In reply to a suggestion of O'Connell's that liberty should be given first and the question of compensation considered later, Mr. Gladstone entered into a highly philosophical disquisition upon the true conception of property. "Much has been said to-night," he urged, "with reference to the principle of property which is recognised by his Majesty's Government. I cannot help thinking that the arguments of the learned member for Dublin proceed upon a misconception of the term 'property.' I do not view property as an abstract thing; it is the creature of civil society: by the Legislature it is granted, and by the Legislature it is destroyed. The question is not whether slaves are property in the abstract nature of things, but whether this description of possession be not property within the limits of the Constitution."

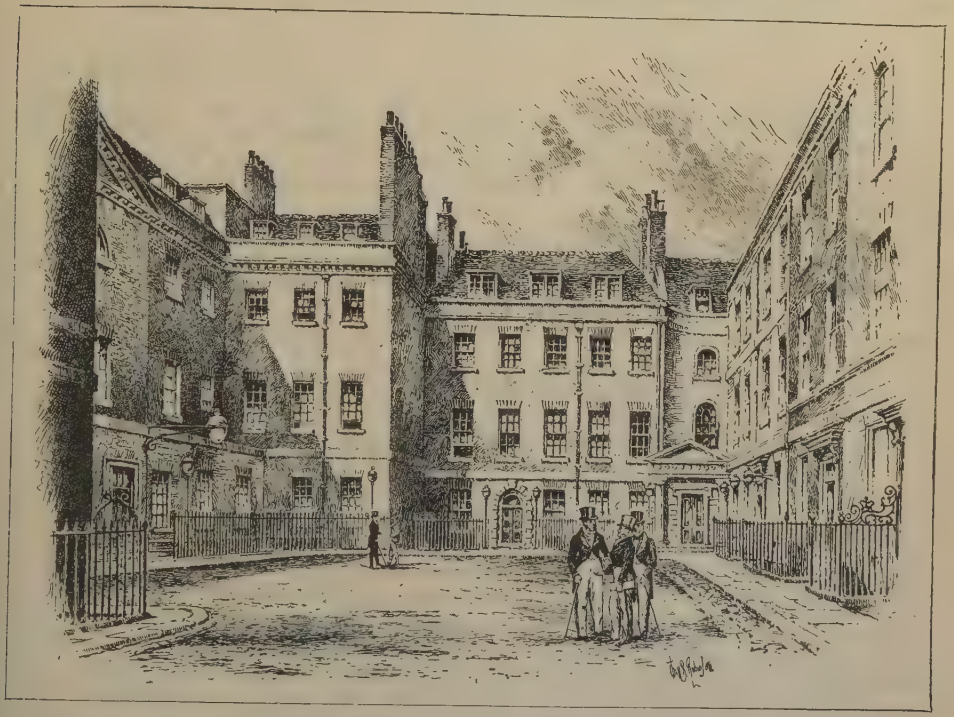
The speech was, of course, an elaborate and carefully prepared effort. Mr. Russell, in his charming biography, tells how, as Mr. Gladstone on the morning of the debate was riding in Hyde Park on his grey Arabian mare, with "his hat, narrow-brimmed, high up on the centre of his head, sustained by a crop of thick, curly hair," a passer-by pointed him out to another new member—Lord Charles Russell—and said, "That is Gladstone. He is to make his maiden speech to-night. It will be worth hearing."

"An able and eloquent speech" was Buxton's verdict when he joined the debate later. Another contemporary, George Keppel, afterwards Earl of Albemarle, and one of the new Whig members for Norfolk, recollected that one evening, on taking his place, he found "on his legs" a beardless youth, with whose appearance and manner he was greatly struck. "He had an earnest, intelligent countenance, and large expressive black eyes. Young as he was, he had evidently what is called 'the ear of the House'; and yet the cause he advocated was not one likely to interest a popular assembly—that of the Planter *versus* the Slave. I had placed myself behind the Treasury Bench. 'Who is he?' I asked one of the Ministers. I was answered, 'He is the member for Newark—a young fellow who will some day make a great figure in Parliament.' My informant was Geoffrey Stanley, then Whig Secretary of the Colonies, and in charge of the Negro Emancipation Bill, afterwards Earl of Derby; and the young Conservative orator was William Ewart Gladstone—two statesmen each

**Contemporary Criticism.**

of whom subsequently became Prime Minister—and leader of the party to which he was at this time diametrically opposed." *

The late Earl Grey (the Howick whose attack had provoked Mr. Gladstone) wrote to Mr. Robbins on May 29th, 1893: "The speech made a great sensation at the time, it being thought a most remarkable one as made by a new speaker. Like others who heard it, I greatly admired the power as a speaker exhibited by Mr. Gladstone, with the singular charm of voice and manner which has ever since distinguished him."



THE OLD COLONIAL OFFICES, DOWNING STREET.

*(From a Drawing by J. C. Buckler, 1827.)*

Four nights later Stanley himself—"the Rupert of debate"—then, in Greville's opinion, with the possible exception of Peel, the most conspicuous figure in the House of Commons, conveyed a public compliment which more than bears out the remark which he passed to Keppel. "If the honourable gentleman," said Stanley, "will permit me to make the observation, I beg to say that I never listened with greater pleasure to any speech than I did to the speech of the honourable member for Newark, who then addressed the House, I believe, for the first time; and who brought forward his case and argued it with a temper, an ability, and a fairness

**A Compliment from Stanley.**

* "Fifty Years of My Life," vol. ii., p. 309.

which may well be cited as a good model to many older members of this House, and which hold out to this House and to the country grounds of confident expectation that, whatever cause shall have the good fortune of his advocacy, will derive from it great support." Indeed the speech, though not technically a maiden speech, was obviously regarded by the Parliamentarians of the time as the prelude to a great Parliamentary career. So much is proved—if further proof were needed—by the following letter from King William IV. to Lord Althorp, which, as Sir Denis Le Marchant remarks, is a pleasing testimony to the justice which the Whig leader was always ready to show to a political opponent:—

"Windsor Castle.
"June 4th, 1833.

"The King has received Viscount Althorp's letter of yesterday, from which his Majesty has learnt, with much satisfaction, that Mr. Stanley's first resolution on the West India question has been carried unanimously. He rejoices that a young member has come forward in so promising a manner, as Viscount Althorp states Mr. W. E. Gladstone to have done."

Mr. Gladstone might well be satisfied with the results of his efforts. He had not in fact done anything to prevent the solution of the problem. He had defended the planters, but he had not defended slavery. He had done all that ingenuity could do to refute the serious charges which had been brought against his father concerning the management of the Vreed-en-Hoop estate. The remainder of his criticisms were not serious, and were mainly directed towards improving the terms of settlement in favour of the planters. The Emancipation Bill was finally passed in August, to the surprise of many old Parliamentary hands. It was a good omen for the Whigs. And, indeed, they were destined to pass two more measures unrivalled in the legislation of the century, if we look to the moral and material benefits which they have conferred upon the nation. But Mr. Gladstone was still blind to the corruption of the crumbling institutions which he had been elected to maintain. The temper which prevailed in the political circles in which he was now moving was similar to that which had prevailed in the academical circles that he had left. The growth of freedom was regarded with jealousy and fear. Hence it was deemed necessary to avert the chastisement of political and municipal corruption in order to prevent and obstruct the introduction of democratic license. Popular control was the bugbear of the classes which had been accustomed to the privileges of irresponsible government. There was "no feeling of security"; even the agreeable Greville was beginning to feel uneasy about his snug little sinecure at the Privy Council.

**The General Effect of the Speech.**

On the 4th of July, 1833, Mr. Gladstone vainly attempted to induce the House to reject a Whig motion for the appointment of a select committee to continue the inquiry into the cases of electoral corruption at Liverpool. Both he and his brother Thomas had been stung by O'Connell's allusions to "the bribing cycle of Mr. Canning." Mr. Gladstone's case was not a very strong one. Liverpool, he argued, was under disadvantages owing to the notoriety of the election of 1830, which prevented the present charges from being impartially considered. "There is no doubt that the

**Electoral Corruption: a Defence of Liverpool.**

proceedings of that election were sufficient to ensure for the town of Liverpool an immortality of disgrace." But this was due to an "accidental combination of circumstances." Normally there was nothing in Liverpool which need make the political conscience uneasy. "Previously to that election, the freemen of the town of Liverpool, who were for the most part composed of the working classes, had been accustomed to vote, not under the influence of bribery, but in conformity very commonly with the example of their masters. I admit that these elections may have been carried on in a manner which is exceedingly to be deprecated in many respects; I admit that there may have been a considerable degree of treating; and it is possible, for aught I know, that there may have been more or less payment of wages; but as to direct bribery, I am confident, from all I can learn, it had not prevailed extensively or systematically, that it was not the moving spring of electioneering transactions." After these large admissions it is difficult to read the peroration without a smile:—

"I implore the House of Commons, in the name of principle, in the name of equity, in the name of common sense, to refuse the prolongation of this enquiry; to refuse to immolate, on such insufficient pretexts, the rights of these poor freemen; not imperceptibly to be led into the decision of a general principle under cover of a particular case; and not to offer so poor a tribute to the hunger of the Genius of Reform."

It is not surprising that O'Connell fastened upon this speech with avidity:—

"It was with pleasure I witnessed the talent displayed by the honourable member for Newark. Everybody who heard him must have felt delighted at the exhibition of the powers of his vigorous and cultivated mind; but especially was I delighted, not at his ingenuity, but his ingenuousness —for his statement would have removed any doubt I could have entertained as to the corruption which has prevailed at the Liverpool elections in which the freemen have been concerned." **O'Connell's Reply.**

Later on he followed Mr. Gladstone into the case of "the poor freemen":—

"The statement of the honourable member for Newark is that up to 1830 they had no will of their own, but followed some bellwether whom they chose as a guide. They got a will of their own, however, in 1830. For the first time they attain a legal age. And what do we find? Why, the very perfection of iniquity. It is said *nemo repente fuit turpissimus;* but these freemen, innocent as sucking doves up to 1830, suddenly became so bad as to form for themselves, as the honourable member has called it, an 'immortality of disgrace.' At one moment we find them naked innocents, crawling helplessly into elective life; and at the next in the performance of such vigorous iniquity as to earn for themselves in a single fortnight 'an immortality of disgrace.'"

This was not the last time that the young member for Newark suffered for the debating services which (by the admission of his ablest opponents) he rendered to the Tory party. Nothing could have been much more unfortunate, from any point of view, than their endeavours to veil and protect the abuses of the Irish Church Establishment. Unhappily Mr. Gladstone was entrapped, along with many other enthusiastic young Churchmen, into a completely false position, from which he had to extricate himself as best he could when he came to realise the true state of things. "On the night of July 8th, when the Irish Temporalities Bill was finally passed **The Irish Church.**

by a majority of 180, Mr. Gladstone found himself as a zealous Anglican supporter of the State Establishment in a difficult position; and his speech as usual reflected his difficulty—his fear of voting for a measure which mitigated a few notorious abuses lest it should be interpreted as acquiescence in some more radical change." "I am not disposed," he began, "to shelter myself under the ignoble protection of silence on this occasion, and to have it supposed that I am willing to defend the Church by my vote and not by my voice." But he spoke with so uncertain a voice, that a controversy arose afterwards as to the side on which he was voting, a certain Colonel Evans who followed assuming that the member for Newark "votes *for* the Bill because it will strengthen the Church in Ireland." "No! No! against it!" exclaimed Mr. Thomas Gladstone. "I did not hear the whole of the honourable member's speech,' replied Colonel Evans, "but I understood him to advocate the Bill because it would strengthen the Irish Church; and I was about to observe that that is my reason for voting against it."

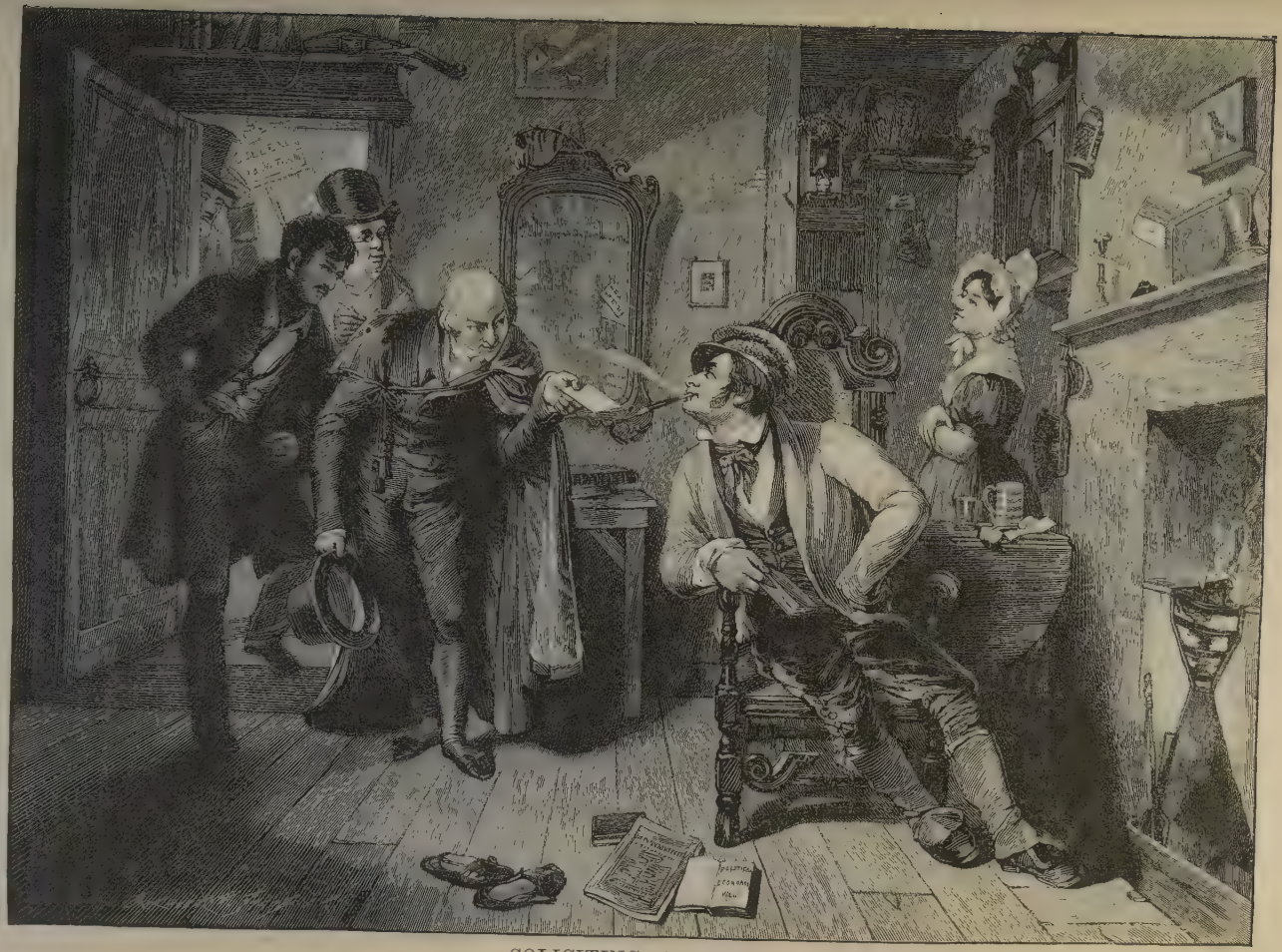
At the end of his speech Mr. Gladstone's opposition certainly seemed to have been conciliated:—"All I can do, therefore," he said, "is to earnestly hope that it will produce the effect intended by its framers, namely, that of strengthening and extending the Irish Church; and I am willing to acknowledge, for my part, that I do not think it conceived in a spoliating spirit. I am not surprised, therefore, that the Bill has disappointed the expectations of some persons; but the provisions which cause disappointment to them disarm my hostility." In the earlier part of his speech, however, he had produced a somewhat sophistical argument in favour of allowing a Church, however lethargic and corrupt, to retain its wealth and its State maintenance, by a reference to the want of missionary zeal on the part of the Protestant Church of the Vaudois Valley, and by putting into the mouths of his opponents a proposition as absurd as that which connected the increase of sugar production with the decrease of human life:—

**Special Pleading.**

"I do not think that those who couple the wealth and inactivity of the Church in Ireland have made out their case. True it is that the Church in Ireland has done little for the cause of Protestantism—true it is that she has slumbered for a long series of years; but I ask, is the Irish Church the only ecclesiastical establishment that has slumbered almost ever since the Reformation? Are we to suppose that if the Church of Ireland were poor, it would necessarily be zealous and active? I think that this would not be the case; the history of the world and its present condition prove that wealth is not the only cause that produces selfishness in an ecclesiastical community. Let those who think that primitive apostolic poverty is necessary to stimulate the zeal and activity of a church look at what has taken place in the Valley of the Vaudois. The people there maintain the pure principles for which their ancestors fought and bled, but is it found that their activity, as a church, is in proportion to their want of worldly means? Certainly not. Indeed there is every reason to believe that the Protestant Church in the Vaudois would not have been able to maintain itself had it not been for the pecuniary assistance which it obtained from this country."

Mr. Gladstone soon passed to a more serious development of his case for the maintenance of the Irish Church as a State institution with all its temporalities and endowments:—

"If we wish to discover the cause of the selfishness of the Irish Church, we must inquire how it is that the sublime impulse which was communicated to the human mind in the



SOLICITING A VOTE.

(*From the Picture by R. W. Buss*, 1834.)

sixteenth century, slumbered occasionally during the seventeenth, and was converted into torpor in the eighteenth century. I maintain, however, that since the Union, the Irish Church has done all for the advancement of true religion that human agency could effect. I think no one can deny that in a country situated like Ireland, it must be of immense importance to have scattered over the face of the kingdom a body of men who are gentlemen by education and Christians by profession. I am of opinion that the Irish Church, even as it now stands, is a strong link of connection between Ireland and this country. I do not, however, defend the Irish Church on the ground of these uses alone, for I do not hesitate to say that I consider that Establishment to be essentially sacred in its nature. It will be a desecration of the Church to divert the revenues destined for the advancement of religion to political uses. I, as a Protestant, am bound to recollect that our forefathers had weighty cause for seceding from the Church of Rome; and I need offer no apology to the Roman Catholic members of this assembly for expressing a desire that the most ample means may be afforded for spreading the Protestant faith—I mean, by the exposition and discussion of its doctrines: and then, let God defend the right. It is because I desire to see the true faith extended for the benefit of those who oppose it that I object to anything which, in the remotest degree, is calculated to injure the Church Establishment in Ireland. It is because I conceive that the Bill, along with much valuable matter, contains some most objectionable principles, that I feel myself constrained to reject it."

Holding these opinions, Mr. Gladstone could not consent to surrender "the necessary principle that the nation should be taxed for the support of a national Church," nor even consent to a reduction in the number of bishops, because he looked forward "to the prospective expansion of the Church;" and, having reduced the bishops, "it will be difficult for us to get them replaced." It is impossible not to admire the candour and the audacity with which the young member for Newark laid down the propositions which were afterwards in a more elaborate form to be delivered into the hand of the Edinburgh reviewer. But what would he have said to the story which Duncannon narrated to Greville a couple of weeks after this debate?—

"He (Duncannon) talked much of the Irish Church, and of the abominations that had been going on even under his own eyes. One case he mentions of a man who holds a living of £1,000 a year close to Bessborough, whom he knows. There is no house, no church, and there are no Protestants in the parish.

"He went there to be inducted, and dined with Duncannon at Bessborough the day after.

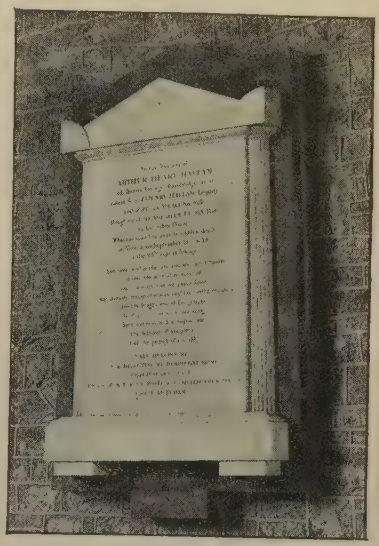
"Duncannon asked him how he managed the necessary form, and he said he had been obliged to borrow the clerk and three Protestants from a neighbouring parish, and had read the morning and evening service to them within the ruined walls of the old Abbey, and they signed a certificate that he had complied with the forms prescribed by law; he added that people would no longer endure such things, that no existing interests were to be touched, and that if remedial measures were still opposed, the whole fabric would be pulled down. He was still persuaded that the Opposition (in the House of Lords) meant to throw out the Bill." *

**Death of Arthur Hallam, 1833.**

The death of Arthur Hallam in September of this year (1833) was the first of the deep personal losses which fell all the more heavily upon Mr. Gladstone because of close friendships outside his own family circle he had but few. It was Mr. Gladstone whom Henry Hallam, the father, describes as "one of Arthur's earliest and most distinguished friends," and Mr. Gladstone who wrote in the Preface to the "Remains of Arthur Henry Hallam": "It was my happiness to live at Eton in habits of close intimacy with him; and

* The Greville Memoirs (1st Series), vol. iii., pp. 9-10.

the sentiments of affection which that intimacy produced were of a kind never to be effaced. Painfully mindful as I am of the privileges, which I then so largely enjoyed, of the elevating effects derived from intercourse with a spirit such as his, of the rapid and continued expansion of all his powers, of his rare and, so far as I have seen, unparalleled endowments, and of his deep enthusiastic affections, both religious and human, I have taken upon me thus to render my feeble testimony to a memory which will ever be dear to my heart." Mr. Gladstone never forgot the friend of his youth. In the January of 1898 his "Personal Recollections of Arthur Hallam" appeared in the Press.



MEMORIAL TABLET TO ARTHUR HALLAM IN CLEVEDON CHURCH.

Early in 1834 an academical crisis arose in Oxford owing to a dispute as to the proper successor to Lord Grenville, Chancellor of the University, who died towards the end of the year 1833. The names of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of Sir Robert Peel found favour with a few. But the Duke of Wellington, who was widely revered for his desire to save the country from the consequences of intelligent administration, was naturally regarded (in spite of the circumstance that he had been at no University himself) as the ideal Chancellor by the majority of the electors. Gladstone and some others (says Roundell Palmer), "either because they were attached to the memory of Canning, or giving too much credit to reports which reflected upon the Duke's private character, were vehemently opposed to him." Indeed, Mr. Gladstone seems to have expressed his opinion in sufficiently strong language, "with a degree of vigour not altogether consistent with a temperate and equable judgment." The insinuation may be neglected, as it belongs to the Home Rule period. But there is also a contemporary letter: "Gladstone is here, and complains bitterly of the whole proceeding. He thinks that the election will disgrace Oxford, as the stronghold of religion and the Church, in the eyes both of the present age and of posterity." Oxford agreed almost unanimously to "disgrace" itself in February, 1834. But on the occasion of his installation the Duke, to the amazement of Christie, a young Oriel Fellow, only made one false quantity in his Latin speech. Christie, who knew more of Latinity than of the language of the Court, seems to have been equally surprised at the Duke of Cumberland for "swearing incessantly the whole evening." Probably Mr. Gladstone's objection was in part scholarly, in part ecclesiastical. A movement was being set on foot for abolishing the rule which required undergraduates on their matriculation to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, and strong Anglicans entertained doubts as to the religiosity and theological

**Opposing the Duke of Wellington, 1834.**

capacity of the hero of Waterloo. And these doubts were justified, for, as Frederic Rogers (Lord Blachford) informs his sister in the autumn of the following year, "the Duke of Wellington and our Parliamentary friends have written down to the Heads of Houses to say that they find great difficulty in defending our present position with regard to our imposition of the Articles at Entrance. True enough for them. I should think they would be about as much at home in defending the doctrine of Justification or the Articles themselves." However, with the help of Convocation and the House of Lords the test, product of bigotry and manufacturer of hypocrisy, emblem of religion and engine of agnosticism, was continued for many years longer.

**Qualifying for the M.A. Degree.**

The following extract from the Christ Church Buttery Book explains the interest Mr. Gladstone continued to take in the government of the University; for it shows that he spent the Lent and part of the Summer Term of 1834 in Christ Church, the degree of Master of Arts at that time involving a residential as well as a pecuniary qualification:—

MR. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Entered at Christ Church*, Lent Term ... ... | 1828 | — |
| Easter and Act* Term ... ... ... ... | ,, | — |
| Michaelmas ,, ... ... ... ... | ,, | Kept. |
| Lent ,, ... ... ... ... | 1829 | Kept. |
| Easter and Act ,, ... ... ... ... | ,, | Kept. |
| Michaelmas ,, ... ... ... ... | ,, | Kept. |
| Lent ,, ... ... ... ... | 1830 | Kept. |
| Easter and Act ,, ... ... ... ... | ,, | Kept. |
| Michaelmas ,, ... ... ... ... | ,, | Kept. |
| Lent ,, ... ... ... ... | 1831 | Kept. |
| Easter and Act ,, ... ... ... ... | ,, | Kept. |
| Michaelmas ,, ... ... ... ... | ,, | Kept |
| Lent ,, ... ... ... ... | 1832 | Kept. |
| Proceeded to Degree of B.A., Lent Term ... | 1832 | — |
| Lent Term ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1834 | Kept. |
| Proceeded to Degree of M.A., Act Term ... | 1834 | — |

**The Effects of Reform**

A year of a Reformed Parliament had dispelled most of the fears with which moderate and mediocre politicians had regarded the first triumph of representative principles. But in dispelling fears it had disappointed hopes; and the Grey Government was already beginning to totter, harassed by the House of Lords, which generally mauled or threw out its best measures, embarrassed by the support of the Tories whenever it was tempted to make a false step, and unable to rely upon the consistent support of its nominal followers, who constituted an enormous but undisciplined majority.

Nevertheless, some excellent work had been accomplished, for the House was losing its old dilettante character. Keen observers noticed the increasing sensitiveness of members to public opinion, and especially to the opinion of their constituents. About this time voting lists began to be published for the first time, and a member of Parliament found

* "Act term" = the Term preparatory to receiving an M.A. Degree.

INSTALLATION OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AS CHANCELLOR OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY, 1834.

*(From a Contemporary Print.)*

that he had to reflect before he gratified a private whim at the expense of principles which he had publicly professed. In short—to the horror of polite society*—a member of Parliament was becoming, in some small and limited sense, a delegate of the people. In no sphere was this increasing sense of responsibility felt more rapidly or beneficially than in the improvement of the tone adopted by the House towards all kinds of corruption, whether in ecclesiastical establishments, public departments, official sinecures, or Parliamentary elections. Long afterwards Mr. Gladstone looked back to this period with admiration and regret "as the period of the most honest, upright, and thrifty Administration ever known in England."†

More About Corruption at Liverpool.

A biographer who was unwilling to admit that Mr. Gladstone ever made a mistake would pass lightly over the various stages of the Liverpool Freemen Bill, and of the controversy which preceded it. The zeal with which he endeavoured to defend the political purity of his native town arose, no doubt, from two causes. In the first place, he was quick to resent any imputation against Canning, who had been so long one of the members for Liverpool; secondly, the inquiry could not have been palatable to his father. Thus filial piety and political loyalty combined to lead him into the long-sustained and chivalrous, but Quixotic and absurdly impossible, task of whitewashing facts by theories, and of clearing away charges which even his own leaders admitted to be well-founded in the main by what were, after all, little more than rhetorical assertions.

On March 12th, 1834, Routch, member for Knaresborough—and members for Knaresborough might well be regarded as expert witnesses in these matters—made a remarkable statement: "As long as I can remember Liverpool, there never has been an election at which its walls have not been covered with placards stating the prices that would be given by every candidate for votes; and every low fellow you met in the street was willing to tell you the price for which he would sell his vote. The man who cleaned your shoes would say, 'I have a vote, sir, but I shall not give it to-day, because I expect a better price for it to-morrow.'"

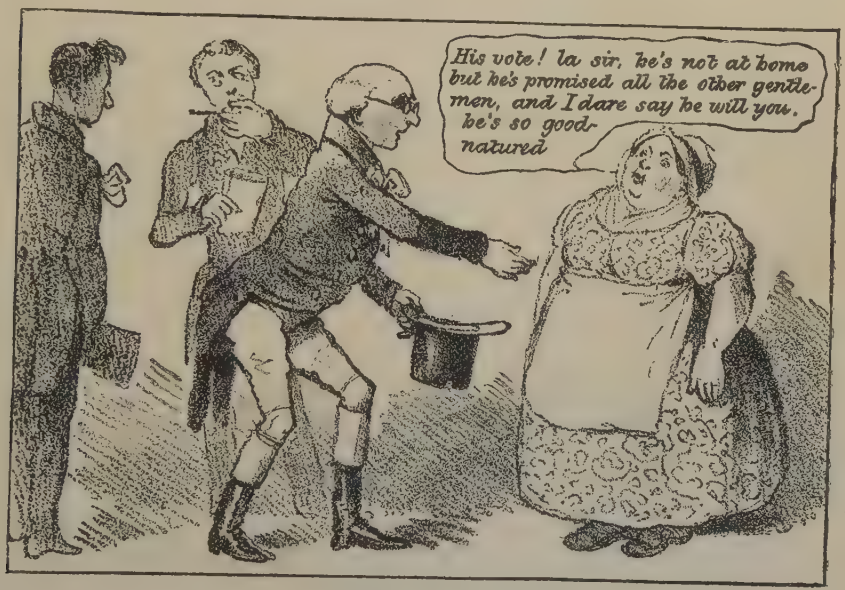
Mr. Gladstone followed at once; spoke of the necessity for adhering with rigour and impartiality to the judicial rules of evidence, solemnly called upon Mr. Routch to mention the occasions on which he saw those placards, and finally warmed to his work under the stimulating influence of an ironical interruption. "I have nothing," he declared, "but traditionary evidence to guide my judgment: I therefore speak under this reservation; but my firm conviction is that there was no bribery in Liverpool prior to the year 1830, as far as regarded the election of

* "Sir John Beckett is just gone to stand for Leeds; and certainly the catechism to which he was there forced to submit is very ominous. A seat in the House of Commons will cease to be an object of ambition to honourable and independent men, if it can only be obtained by cringing and servility to the rabble of great towns, and when it shall be established that the member is to be a slave bound hand and foot by pledges and responsible for every vote he gives to masters who are equally tyrannical and unreasonable."—The Greville Memoirs (1st Series), vol. iii., p. 54.

† Hansard, May 27th, 1869.

members to serve in Parliament." There being sarcastic cries of "Hear, hear!" he continued:—

"Now, Sir, let me ask, is that sneer becoming? Let gentlemen have the goodness to hear my sentence to the end: I paused only that I might measure the terms of my assertion as well as time would allow. I allege then, Sir, my conviction that there was no bribery in Liverpool at any Parliamentary election previous to 1830 which would at all justify the wide and sweeping phrases of this preamble. I know indeed that some of those who were the partisans of the present Lord Chancellor [Brougham] when he was a candidate for the representation of Liverpool, have voluntarily come forward to say that they gave bribes, and that they were accessory to the giving of bribes by others upon that occasion; but as far as regards the purity of Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson, I believe there was no bribery."




*CANVASSING.*

(*From a Print published in* 1832.)

Mr. Gladstone admitted that "two offices of the customs-house were bargained for and sold," and that there was a presentment of the Grand Jury in 1827; but "let any gentleman consider the amount and extent of these two sales for two such offices, and he will see that when we compare them with the extent of a constituency of 4,000 or 5,000, they cannot be taken as substantiating in any degree the allegations of gross, notorious, and universal bribery."

On March 19th, when the Bill was finally carried by a majority of two to one, Mr. Gladstone reasserted "in the most positive terms" his belief "that the party which returned Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson for twelve years free of all expense never received or expended a single shilling for the purposes of bribery." In the election of 1830, when a certain Mr. Bolton came forward "in a most liberal manner"

with £10,000, it was "an act of compassion"; to which Colonel Williams, who had been singled out for his "random assertions" by the member for Newark, replied with the rather pertinent question: "What became of the £10,000 which this compassionate gentleman subscribed after the election of 1830? and further, what became of the £50,000 which was subscribed before the last election?" Strange to say, this particular superstition of Mr. Gladstone's always remained with him; for Liverpool bribery was still liberality in the year 1892:—

"In those days Liverpool election contests were, happily, much rarer than they are now; but when they did come they were very costly. The contest of 1812 in Liverpool was a very costly contest. My father had taken, I think, a leading share in bringing down to the town as candidate Mr. Canning, for whom he had a profound—I might almost say, semi-idolatrous—veneration, on which I myself was brought up, and which I have by no means in all respects abandoned. My father had the responsible office of treasurer of the election committee. The contest lasted, I think, twelve or fourteen days. I forget what the extreme limit of those times was, but whatever the extreme limit was, it was reached. It is not surprising that under those circumstances the funds provided for the election, after a certain number of days, began to show symptoms of approaching exhaustion. This naturally struck the mind of my father, and the measure that he adopted was a very simple one. He sent round a circular to the same set of gentlemen who had subscribed for the election before. They all of them answered to the call, and they sent in second subscriptions, which were so liberal that at the close of the contest he returned to them sixty per cent. of the money. I think I have proved my case as to the pecuniary liberality of the men of Liverpool of that day; and I will go so far as to say that in this respect of giving freely of their money for means which they judged to be worthy and good, the people of Liverpool at the beginning of the nineteenth century set a good and noble example to the people of Liverpool at the end of it." *

There still remains in this speech of March 19th, 1834, one highly characteristic passage with a most subtle defence of the bribery which admittedly occurred in the election of 1830: "Now if there was a case in which, though the guilt was great, the publication of that guilt so far as the poor were concerned was great also, it was the election for Liverpool in 1830. It cannot be supposed that men of the class of the Liverpool freemen ever entertain a very high abstract notion of the political franchise. Now in the election of 1830, the contest was between candidates whose political convictions were completely identified. Now, in what consists the heinousness of bribery? It is in the barter of conviction for money, that conviction being assumed to be founded on a deliberate preference of one among several codes of principles professed by the several candidates. Now, here conviction was not sold; for there was no conviction to sell. The two candidates were alike in opinion. Can we wonder then, if in the absence of the legitimate motive of preference men suffered their indifference to be influenced by the offer of money?"

In another and better strain Mr. Gladstone urged that the rich man—the briber—rather than the poor bribee should be punished: "Why should you let the bribers and those who profit most by the guilt, and who in my mind are chargeable with by far the greater share of it, escape scot free?" Here Mr. Gladstone was in advance of the Whigs. Wason replied: "The honourable gentleman the member for Newark says that you ought to punish the briber, but I have never been of that opinion."

* Speech of Mr. Gladstone at Liverpool, December 3rd, 1892.

LIVERPOOL IN 1836.

*(From the Painting by S. Walters.)*

Ireland was the chief embarrassment of the Government, and at the end of May differences which had long existed in the Cabinet came to a head. Stanley, who believed in resolute government and the support of ecclesiastical abuses, seceded; and with him Sir James Graham and the Earl of Ripon. At the beginning of July Althorp, differing from Grey as to the renewal of a Coercion Act for Ireland, withdrew from the leadership of the House of Commons. The Grey Ministry at once collapsed. The King sent for Lord Melbourne, and the first Melbourne Ministry was easily constituted, with Palmerston as Foreign Secretary and Althorp as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons.

**The Melbourne Government, 1834.**

On July 28th, 1834, the Universities Admission Bill came up for a third reading; and Mr. Gladstone, premising that he had no intention of trespassing at any length upon the patience of the House, opened the debate in a speech which extends to more than six columns in the *Mirror of Parliament*, and would cover nearly three of a modern daily newspaper. Mr. Gladstone held almost into middle life that certain civil rights should be withheld from those who did not profess the Christian faith. But in 1834 he was far from having passed the narrower barriers of Anglican intolerance. Trained in the newly found Anglicanism of a Lowland Scotsman, he had gone blindfold through the University. He had not noticed the hypocrisy of compulsory chapels, and had not felt the horror expressed by Lord Palmerston of "young men going from prayer to wine and from wine to prayer." He was impressed by the affected independence of ninety-eight bigoted tutors who talked of resignation if tests were abolished. "The honourable gentleman," said Lord Palmerston, who followed a little later, "has argued that this Bill would be an instance of persecution, by compelling men who think that it is contrary to their religion to admit Dissenters to the Universities so to admit them. That argument is founded, undoubtedly, upon truth, but it is founded upon a painful truth, with respect to the constitution of human nature, because it is certainly true that there is nothing which mankind resists more stubbornly than any attempt to compel them to cease from acts of intolerance. In that respect it will be persecution, but it will be a sort of persecution which I am not afraid to join in, and which I would gladly concur in inflicting upon some of the Professors at Oxford."

**University Tests.**

The case of the supporters of the measure was absolutely convincing. "Only see," cried Palmerston, "the inconsistency to which these honourable gentlemen (the opponents of the Bill) are reduced! They admit Dissenters to sit with us in this House, and to discharge the highest functions of legislation; they admit them, together with the members of the Church of England, to perform every duty, civil and political, which can be performed in every class and relation of life, and yet they say that Dissenters shall not be admitted in common with the members of the Church of England to those institutions of the country where the best education can be afforded." Mr. Gladstone's only reply was that the Universities were not national institutions, except in so far as they were connected with the national Church, and were to be regarded as preparatory seminaries for that Church. He hoped that the colleges would never be thrown open to non-Anglicans, whether

Christians or not. The House of Commons passed the Bill by a majority of 154 votes to 75. But there were no Dissenters in the House of Lords, and that Chamber threw it out by 187 votes to 85. In the following spring Mr. Gladstone's views are more fully disclosed in some letters to Pusey in reference to a proposal by University Liberals that a declaration of general uniformity should be substituted for subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. He would be inclined to vote against the alteration, but not on quite the same grounds as Pusey:—"So far as regards evil or danger to be apprehended from the contact of the Dissenters, I fear that if we are to wait until the whole body of Churchmen is in such a state that all will be individually as well as collectively secure against labefaction, the prospect of relaxing the entrance will be indefinitely removed."

But the reasons for "relaxing the entrance" which at this time appealed to Mr. Gladstone were anything but liberal. The University was to be a sort of decoy-duck for converting youthful Dissenters. "The first *sine quâ non* with me would be, that the University should not be vexed by the interposition of Parliament. This upon every ground, and not acting peculiarly as a member of the University. Next to this (in importance, however, first), and acting in this character, the most essential object seems to be the maintenance of a Church of England education, and not only its maintenance as at present, but its consummation and perfection in your system. This being secured—fully and certainly secured, by whatever measures and whatever degree of exclusiveness may be necessary to give this guarantee—it would give me pleasure to see Dissenters avail themselves, permissively, but to the utmost practicable extent, of our Church education, and therefore to see removed, if it be the pleasure of the University, and especially of its resident members, any subscription at entrance which is likely to form an absolute and insuperable bar to their becoming students in the University, at a period of life when they are probably little prejudiced in favour of Dissent, and therefore hopeful for the Church, but yet, upon the other hand, not prepared to make an absolute renunciation of it [Dissent] by a formal subscription."*

Those were hardly the times for

> "A friendly Whig to chant a Tory's praise."

But George Fox, who, though a Whig and a poetaster, was a Fellow of New College, wrote about this time in prophetic verse:—

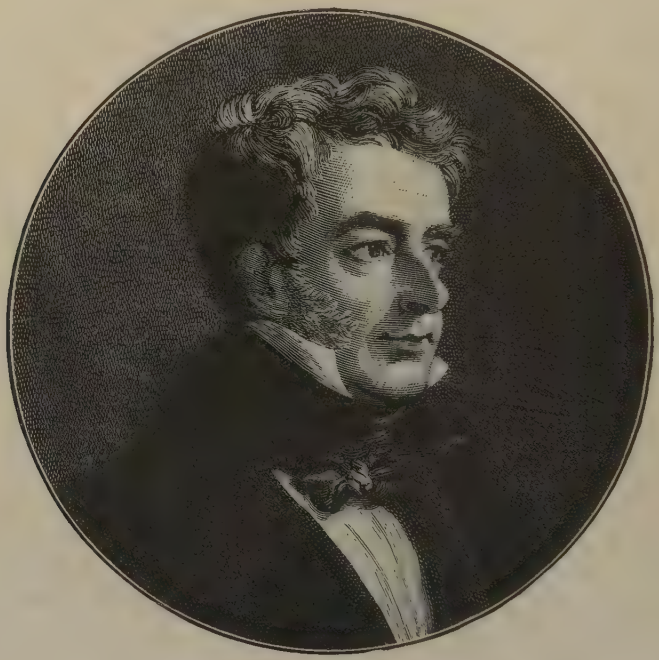
> "Perchance ere long to shine in senates first,
> If manhood echo what his youth rehears'd,
> Soon Gladstone's brows will bloom with greener bays
> Than twine the chaplet of a minstrel's lays,
> Nor heed, while poring o'er each graven line,
> The far faint music of a lute like mine."

On the 16th of October, 1834, the old Houses of Parliament were destroyed by fire, the result of the over-heating of a flue; and for some years afterwards the legislators of Great Britain were housed in temporary buildings.

* *Cf.* Liddon's Pusey, vol. i., pp. 293, 294.

It was not long before the decease of a peer and the derangement of a king brought Mr. Gladstone into office. "Yesterday morning," wrote Greville on November 16th, 1834, "the town was electrified by the news that Melbourne's Government was at an end. Nobody had the slightest suspicion of such an impending catastrophe; the members themselves reposed in perfect security. I never saw astonishment so great on every side; nobody pretended to have prophesied or expected such an event." The story of this last exercise of the Royal prerogative—or, at least, the

**The Ministry Dismissed, 1834.**



LORD MELBOURNE.

(*From the Painting by Sir George Hayter.*)

last overt defiance of the House of Commons by the Crown—is well known; how the elevation of Althorp to the Upper House left the leadership of the House of Commons vacant; how Melbourne visited the King at Brighton, and told him that Lord John Russell must be tried and that the Cabinet must be strengthened by the infusion of a Radical element, as a concession to the principles of Reform; how the King, in a fit of alarm, possibly from a mere petulant desire for novelty, announced that he had no longer any confidence in the stability of the Ministry, and promptly wrote to the Duke of Wellington. The situation was made irresistibly comic by the conduct of Brougham, whose journalistic instinct completely overran an already depleted stock of Cabinet loyalty, and so finally demonstrated his unfitness for a position of trust.

Arrived in London, Melbourne determined to say nothing that night, but to summon a Cabinet next day; but as Brougham happened to call on his way from Holland House, Melbourne told him in strict confidence. Brougham had no sooner left than he sent the news to the *Times* office, so that all the Ministers discovered the fact of their dismissal in their morning paper. They had been discarded in the

Turned out! I'll resign—yes!' I am determined to resign—no earthly power shall alter my resolution
Here's a pretty kettle of fish!
What! neither Colonies nor Exchequer
Hollo! G—t and the! neither of us go to India
We are all out!—regularly kicked out!

"RECEIVING THE FATAL NEWS."

(Lord Melbourne rushes into the Cabinet Room exclaiming, "We are all out!—regularly kicked out!")

*From the Cartoon by "H. B." (John Doyle).*

most positive, summary, and peremptory manner; in the plenitude of their fancied strength they had been "unceremoniously kicked out."* The Duke of Wellington promised to carry on the government provisionally until Peel, who was travelling in Italy, could be reached and brought back. Meanwhile the offices of state, great and small, could not be filled up, and London was soon packed with place-hunters. That "lively season," the winter of 1834, has been inimitably described by Disraeli in "Coningsby":—

"Everybody who had been in office, and everybody who wished to be in office; everybody who had ever had anything, and everybody who ever expected to have anything, were alike visible. All of course by mere accident; one might meet the same men regularly every day for a month, who were only 'passing through town.'

* The Greville Memoirs (1st Series), vol. iii., p. 153.

"Now was the time for men to come forward who had never despaired of their country. True, they had voted for the Reform Bill, but that was to prevent a revolution. And now they were quite ready to vote against the Reform Bill, but this was to prevent a dissolution. These are the true patriots, whose confidence in the good sense of their countrymen and in their own selfishness is about equal. In the meantime, the hundred and forty threw a grim glance on the numerous waiters on Providence, and amiable trimmers, who affectionately enquired every day when news might be expected of Sir Robert. Though too weak to form a Government, and having contributed in no wise by their exertions to the fall of the late Ministry, the cohort of Parliamentary Tories felt all the alarm of men who have accidentally stumbled on some treasure-trove, at the suspicious sympathy of new allies."

But what sort of a Government was it to be? There was no one to answer. "They tried the Duke; but nothing could be pumped out of him. All that he knew, which he told in his curt, husky manner, was that he had to carry on the King's government. It was impossible for aspirants to office to show their zeal by speech-making; for they did not know whether to denounce the Reform Act or to praise it; whether the Church was to be remodelled or only admonished; whether Ireland was to be conquered or conciliated." Peel arrived at last on December 9th, and proceeded to construct his Government. There was a large variety of claimants for the smaller posts. "The young Tory," to quote again from Disraeli, "who had contrived to keep his seat in a Government where he had done nothing, but who thought an Under-Secretaryship was now secure, particularly as he was the son of a noble lord who had also in a public capacity plundered and blundered in the good old time. The true political adventurer, who with a dull desperation had stuck at nothing, had never neglected a Treasury note, had been present at every division, never spoke when he was asked to be silent, and was always ready on any subject when they wanted him to open his mouth —who had treated his leaders with servility even behind their backs, and was happy for the day if a future Secretary of the Treasury bowed to him; who had not only discountenanced discontent in the party, but had regularly reported in strict confidence every instance of insubordination which came to his knowledge—might there, too, be detected under all the agonies of the crisis; just beginning to feel the dread misgivings whether being a slave or a sneak were sufficient qualifications for office, without family or connection. Poor fellow! half the industry he had wasted on his cheerless craft might have made his fortune in some decent trade! In dazzling contrast with these throes of low ambition were some brilliant personages who had just scampered up from Melton, thinking it probable that Sir Robert might want some moral lords of the bedchamber."

**Peel's Administration, 1834.**

Mr. Gladstone had been a Canningite, and even now he had far more sympathy with the rigid political and religious views of High Tories like Sir Robert Inglis and the Duke of Newcastle than with the constitutional opportunism of Peel and the belated strategy of the Duke of Wellington. But Peel saw in him a man of talent and industry whose father was wealthy and had great political influence in a most important constituency. High moral character was likewise a recommendation; for Peel, in a letter to Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury,

**Mr. Gladstone selected for Office.**

says: "My object is to win the confidence of the country by my appointments; it is to persons of your character that I look." In any case Mr. Gladstone had already shown himself too brilliant and effective a debater to be overlooked by a Tory Premier. Accordingly his name appeared along with that of Lord Lincoln in the list of the Junior Lords of the Treasury. On December 24th he issued his address to the electors of Newark, in which he necessarily followed the lines laid down by Sir Robert Peel's Tamworth manifesto.* His chief had accepted the Reform Act as a final settlement, thus dashing the hopes of the extreme High Tories, who had hoped for a reactionary policy. Mr. Gladstone gilds the pill as best he can for his patrons and supporters:—

"GENTLEMEN,

"Having accepted the office of a Lord of the Treasury, I have hereby ceased to be your actual Representative; but I at once announce to you my intention of soliciting a renewal of your confidence when the opportunity of exercising your franchise shall arrive.

**An Election Address.**

"During the two Sessions of the present Parliament my first desire has been to see the Institutions of the Country preserved, whatever the hands in which their custody might be entrusted; and this desire has regulated my votes.

"But the position of parties since the last General Election has in my view essentially changed. We had then a Government, of which it must be allowed that it had been pledged to maintain the existing Constitution of England—to afford fair support to the depressed interests of Agriculture—and, especially, to preserve the property of the Church—property whose application to the purposes of religion, important to all classes, is peculiarly essential to the well being of those not blessed by opulence.

"The late Government assumed, through a series of changes, a very different character; the most respected and most efficient supporters of the Reform Bill successively separated themselves from it; on one occasion by a refusal to alienate the property of the Church; on another by anxiety to maintain in Ireland personal security and the protection of the law. There remained a body of Ministers whose preponderating bias tended decisively towards rash, violent, and indefinite innovation; and it appears that there were those among the servants of the King who did not scruple to solicit the suffrages of their constituents with promises to act on the principles of Radicalism. An intention to invade Church property was avowed; and, I think, few believe that the constitution of the Cabinet, in its closing period, afforded any security against new and extensive changes in our elective system, or for the reasonable protection of the millions dependent on the Land.

"The question has, then, as it appears to me, become, whether we are to hurry onwards at intervals, but not long ones, through the medium of the Ballot, short Parliaments, and other questions, called popular, into Republicanism or anarchy; or whether, independently of all party distinctions, the People will support the Crown in the discharge of its duty to maintain in efficiency, and transmit in safety, those old and valuable Institutions under which our Country has greatly flourished.

"With the fullest confidence I anticipate that you have embraced the latter, and the better alternative. In no party or sectarian spirit, but upon this elevated principle alone, do I conceive that Sir Robert Peel undertook the formation of a Government, and desired, at the hands of his Countrymen, a fair trial; and we may trust that the same providential care which has raised this country to pre-eminence, and often saved it from external peril, will, in this time of domestic difficulty, be found its effectual safeguard.

"Let me add shortly, but emphatically, concerning the reform of actual abuses, whether in Church or State, that I regard it as a sacred duty—a duty at all times, and certainly

* Greville says of Peel's manifesto: "It is rather too Liberal for the bigoted Tories, but all the moderate people are well satisfied with it."

not least at a period like this, when the danger of neglecting it is most clear and imminent —a duty not inimical to true and determined Conservative principle, nor a curtailment or modification of such principle, but its legitimate consequences, or rather an actual element of its composition."

There was no contest at Newark. The Tories felt that they could not hold both seats. Handley, therefore, retired; and the Radical, Wilde, was returned unopposed as Mr. Gladstone's colleague. At the nomination the two members and their supporters positively fraternised. Wilde complimented Gladstone, and Gladstone praised the Whigs for their Reform of the Poor Law.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

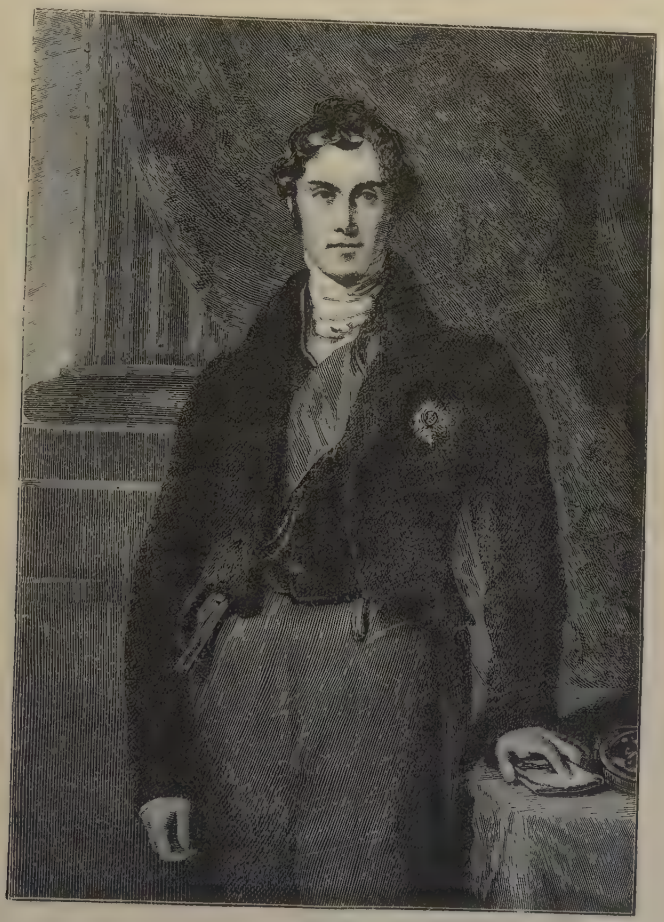
(*From the Drawing by D. Maclise*, 1833.)

In spite of his manifesto, Peel was unable to win the elections. The Sovereign had exercised his right of dismissing Ministers, and had exercised it, as Mr. Gladstone wrote long afterwards with mild irony, "without any strain to the Constitution or any penalty other than the disagreeable sensation of being defeated, and of having greatly strengthened and reinvigorated by recoil the fortunes of the party on whom it had been meant to inflict an overthrow"; adding in another passage,* that this endeavour of King William IV. to assert his personal choice in the appointment of Ministers only gave the Conservatives "a momentary tenure of office without power." But during this momentary tenure Mr. Gladstone was to receive promotion. On January 12th Greville complains in his diary of Peel's appointments, and with some lack of insight objects that Sidney Herbert ought not to have been made Secretary to the Board of Control, "an office of great labour, and involving considerable business in the House of Commons. He is about twenty-two or twenty-three years old, unpractised in business, and never spoke but once in the

**Peel's Defeat in the Country, 1835.**

* "Gleanings," vol. i., p. 38.

House of Commons. . . . He may be very fit for this place, but it remains to be proved, and I am surprised he did not make him begin with a Lordship of the Treasury, or some such thing, and put Gladstone, who is a very clever man, in that post."



LORD ABERDEEN.

*(From the Engraving after the Portrait by Sir T. Lawrence, published* 1831.)

Five days later Lyndhurst, the Lord Chancellor, gave a dinner at which Disraeli and Gladstone met for the first time. Gladstone was struck by the strangeness of Disraeli's dress; Disraeli by the dulness of the dinner. A few days afterwards Peel, or rather Aberdeen, partly met Greville's criticism by making Mr. Gladstone Under-Secretary for the Colonies. Aberdeen mentions the circumstance in a letter to Hudson Gurney:—

**Appointed Colonial Under-Secretary.**

"In consequence of the defeat of my Under-Secretary in the county of Forfar, I have

been obliged to appoint another. I have chosen a young man whom I did not know, and whom I never saw, but of whose good character and abilities I had often heard. He is the young Gladstone, and I hope he will do well. He has no easy part to play in the House of Commons, but it is a fine opening for a young man of talent and ambition, and places him in the way to the highest distinction. He appears to be so amiable that personally I am sure I shall like him."

Mr. Gladstone has given a very pleasant description of his first interview with Lord Aberdeen, to whom he afterwards displayed an almost chivalrous loyalty. "On an evening in the month of January, 1835," he says, in a letter to Lord Stanmore, "I was sent for by Sir Robert Peel, and received from him the offer, which I accepted, of the Under-Secretaryship for the Colonies. From him I went on to your father, who was thus to be, in official home-talk, my master. Without any apprehension of hurting you, I may confess that I went in fear and trembling. I knew Lord Aberdeen only by public rumour. Distinction of itself naturally and properly rather alarms the young. I had heard of his high character; but I had also heard of him as a man of cold manners, and close and even haughty reserve. It was dusk when I entered his room—the one on the first floor, with the bow-window looking to the Park—so that I saw his figure rather than his countenance. I do not recollect the matter of the conversation; but I well remember that, before I had been three minutes with him, all my apprehensions had melted away like snow in the sun; and I came away from that interview conscious, indeed—as who could fail to be conscious?—of his dignity, but of a dignity so tempered by a peculiar purity and gentleness, and so associated with impressions of his kindness, and even friendship, that I believe I thought more about the wonder of his being at that time so misunderstood by the outer world than about the new duties and responsibilities of my new office." *

On the attainment of his new dignity, Mr. Gladstone wrote a second address to his constituents, the phraseology of which gives perhaps the first intimation that political experience was beginning to open his mind and widen his views. He congratulates the Newark electors upon the popular attachment to social order and the venerable institutions of our country, and attributes it to the solid conviction of their permanent advantages, "a conviction not at all enfeebled by the fact, now sometimes announced with the ostentation but not the merit of discovery, that like all other human productions, their structure is capable of beneficial change. It has been, and continues to be, my humble but earnest desire to blend and harmonise the distinct, but not necessarily discordant, principles of preservation and improvement, and to secure their efficiency together with their union, maintaining each in its due relative position, and defending each with increased anxiety, according as either of them may be assailed in opposite directions by the alternate political caprices of successive periods. In the support of these principles, until my conscience, if misguided, shall have become better informed, I hope by God's blessing to proceed." The significance of these sentences must be obvious to the hastiest reader.

* Life of the Earl of Aberdeen by Lord Stanmore, p. 111.

The first question which Mr. Gladstone had to answer in his official capacity was one from Buxton on the subject of the religious education of the negroes in the West Indies; but his real opinion on the subject was brought out later in the session, when Peel's "hundred days' ministry" had come to an end. The Whig Ministry proposed, and in the event carried without a division, a grant of £25,000 to the West Indian legislatures for the provision of the moral and religious instruction of the apprentices. Mr. Gladstone protested against all sects bearing the Christian name being placed upon an equal footing and against an educational grant which would be expended in teaching "the distinctive peculiarities of all sects alike in common with those of the Established Church."

Mr. Gladstone also moved, while in office, for a Select Committee to complete an inquiry into military establishments and expenditure in the Colonies, and reproved Roebuck for his championship of the disaffected Canadians. That fiery and independent politician was at this time the pet of the Utilitarians and Philosophic Radicals—if such an expression can be applied to an object of the harsh caresses of Francis Place and the elder Mill. For no school of thought had Mr. Gladstone a stronger aversion. In his theories you find few traces of Bentham's influence; and even after he became a Liberal his respect for John Stuart Mill never deviated into admiration. On the 16th of March, Roebuck, who was acting as a sort of agent for the popular party in Canada, pointed out that the division there was not between French and English, but between the Democrats and the Tories; that the latter were relying upon the support of their brethren at home; but that the Democrats would not be satisfied until Canada had complete control over her revenue. When Stewart, the Whig member for Lancaster (Sir John Gladstone's old constituency), was speaking, Mr. Gladstone interrupted him with an official suggestion that he should abstain from unnecessarily exciting dissension. Stewart, who had a prepared speech, answered rather viciously: "My honourable friend has reversed Dr. Johnson's definition of a fashionable patron—who, he says, is one that encumbers you with help when you have reached the land; for I was just about landing when my honourable friend thought fit to help me to the encumbrance of his well-meant interruption."

**Roebuck and the Disaffected Canadians.**

Three days later, however, his resentment had disappeared. On the 19th of March Mr. Gladstone brought in his first Bill. It deserves the attention of the biographer for the humanity and utility of its objects, as well as for the masterly manner in which Mr. Gladstone explained it to the House. His speech gives promise not only of his unrivalled power of "getting up" a subject—perhaps the most wonderful of all his intellectual qualities—but also of the complementary faculty, never surpassed, of detailed and lucid exposition. The measure, which is called "The Colonial Passengers Act," was thus introduced by Mr. Gladstone:—"In moving for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Act of 9th George IV., c. 21, with a view of substituting other provisions in its stead, I do not feel called upon to discuss the question of the principle upon which the existing enactments, equally with those now proposed, are founded, although I shall be prepared to defend both the humanity and

**Mr. Gladstone's First Bill, 1835.**

BRITISH POSSESSIONS IN 1835 AND AT THE PRESENT DAY.

policy of such legislative interference as I shall submit to the House, in case either should hereafter be impugned." After this challenge to the rigid *laissez faire* members—a challenge to be taken up by Joseph Hume in the short debate which followed—Mr. Gladstone pointed out that the importance of the subject was proved by the single fact that "in the year 1832 there arrived in Canada alone no less than 51,000 emigrants." He then detailed the material abuses which existed, with the corresponding provisions in the new Bill for removing them. A demurrage of one shilling *per diem* was to be allowed to emigrants (in order to deprive owners of all interest in delay) when, having arrived in the port from which they were to sail, they were subjected to "ruinous and vexatious" detention after the time agreed upon for sailing. Another provision made it compulsory upon the owners of vessels to victual and accommodate their passengers for forty-eight hours after their arrival at the port of discharge, in case it should be demanded. Under the system then prevailing, the unfortunate emigrants were often "landed in herds, more like beasts that perish than human creatures." "It is also proposed," continued Mr. Gladstone, "to make an alteration in the proportion of passengers to the tonnage which vessels are about to carry.* At present, the proportion of passengers is regulated by tonnage, and a question has been raised whether it would not be better to regulate it by measurement. No doubt the tonnage does not always give an accurate idea of the capacity of a ship; but, on the other hand, a system of mensuration for this subject alone would be attended with too much intricacy and difficulty. The present Act provides that no vessel shall carry a greater number of passengers than three to every four tons. It is proposed in the present Bill to raise the number to three to every five tons."

Other provisions were introduced to increase the quantity of food per passenger from fifty to seventy pounds of bread stuff; to prohibit the sale of wine and spirits on board except for medicinal purposes; to compel every ship with 200 persons or more on board to carry a surgeon, and those with less "at least a medicine chest." Lastly, the breach of these and other regulations was to be not only a misdemeanour, but attended with penalties recoverable in a summary way before two justices of the peace. Mr. Gladstone then showed by statistics that the old Act had not put any sensible obstruction in the way of emigration, and concluded his exposition as follows: "For my own part I cannot sacrifice the interests of humanity, when obviously involved, to any speculative principle of commerce, the application of which ought always to be subject to modification from circumstances."

**The Claims of Political Economy and of Humanity.**

This declaration is interesting. Throughout his life Mr. Gladstone never allowed himself to subordinate the claims of humanity to the dictates of the so-called dismal science. A Manchesterian publicist of the narrower and more dogmatic type might ignore the principles of moral and physical health; an impracticable and indiscriminating Socialist might ridicule economic laws and deny their right to limit State

* So the *Mirror of Parliament*. Mr. Gladstone probably said: "in the proportion of passengers, which vessels are *allowed* to carry, to tonnage."

activity: Mr. Gladstone learned to recognise both, and to weigh with almost unerring accuracy their conflicting claims whenever it became necessary to effect a compromise. In this debate the strength of the *laissez faire* school is very clearly brought out, as well as the revolt which its extreme adherents were already provoking. To Hume's objection that "the Passengers Act treated men as if they had no prudence to guide them," Baring gave the soothing reminder that "many of the emigrants come from the ignorant agricultural population of this country to the port at which they embark and behold the sea for the first time. . . . I am friendly to the let-alone principle; but considering the helpless state of the persons for whom it is proposed to legislate we must do something, *although as little as possible*." On the whole, however, the Bill was received with a chorus of approval. One member returned his "sincere thanks to the honourable Under-Secretary for the introduction of a Bill so consonant with the best feelings of humanity;" and Stewart said that "upon the whole a more useful Bill was never brought into the House." He trusted that all the honourable member's measures would be equal to this his first step in legislation.

Meanwhile Peel's humiliating struggle to hold office in the face of a hostile majority was almost at an end. The defeat of Manners Sutton for the Speakership was serious enough; but the *coup de grâce* was reserved for April. On the 30th of March, Lord John Russell, who was brilliantly justifying his selection as Althorp's successor in the leadership of the Whigs in the House of Commons, moved that the House should resolve itself into Committee to inquire into the temporalities of the Irish Church in order that the surplus revenue might be applied to the purposes of general education. Mr. Gladstone spoke on the following day (March 31st): "Upon the abstract question of appropriation my opinions are clear and determinate, as much so perhaps as those of any gentleman in the House. I see a sacredness in Church property as well as in private property; and yet I see a distinction between them. Private property is sacred to persons, and Church property is sacred to purposes." A pleasing and useful subtlety; but a further refinement was necessary to justify the *beati possidentes*. "Now, Sir, did the Reformation violate the sacredness of Church property? Undoubtedly an existing appropriation cannot in all cases be literally maintained; but it is always obligatory to deviate no more than is absolutely necessary from the substantial purpose of the trust. In the alteration of appropriation made at the Reformation that principle was faithfully kept in view. Is that so now? When the Legislature had changed its conscientious belief, it made a corresponding change in the conditions on which Church property was held and administered, but no more; and were members of the Church of Rome again to constitute the governing body, I avow my conviction that a return of Church property to its original conditions would be a fair and legitimate consequence; but till that is the case, till the Union is dissolved, till the representatives of a Catholic population constitute the bulk of the Legislature, I for one shall raise my humble voice to protest against the doctrine of arbitrary and unlimited alienation now propounded." To allow that a majority makes an Establishment was a dangerous admission. For why should the opinions of a Scottish majority be respected while those of

**The Irish Church.**

an Irish majority were trampled upon? Mr. Gladstone, continuing, explained that he did not mean "to make any observations or insinuations offensive to the feelings of honourable gentlemen opposite who may profess the Roman Catholic religion; but this I must say, that the Government, as a Government, maintains that form of belief which it conceives to contain the largest portion of the elements of truth with the smallest admixture of error. It is upon that ground that the Government of this country maintains the Protestant and declines the Catholic religion. But the noble lord (John Russell) invites us to give up that ground: the noble lord and many of the gentlemen who sit around him tell the House that with the truth of religion the Government has nothing whatever to do. Their argument is this: no matter what the religion, no matter whether it be true or false, the fact of its existence is sufficient—wherever it exists it is to be recognised; it is not the business or the duty of a Government to endeavour to influence the belief of its subjects. But may God forbid that the House should assent to such a doctrine!" And a little later, after regretting that Ireland had not been converted as yet, because the Anglican system, so excellent in itself, was unhappily administered by human instruments, he asked rhetorically: "What is the remedy devised by the noble lord for this afflicting dilemma? He offers us a miserable refuge from the abuse of a good principle in the adoption of a bad one."

The effect of the peroration is spoiled by its extreme length, but the first part deserves our admiration for the nobility of its sentiment, as well as for the beauty of its diction. "The science of Government," it ran, "involving, as it has done, the care and direction of the most exalted interests of humanity, and extending its regards to our destinies for ever, has in it an aim and intent which attract the highest aspirations of mankind, and render it worthy to be the occupation and delight of the most honourable and distinguished among men; but if, hereafter, the consideration of religion—the most vital of all subjects to our permanent happiness and advancement—be excluded from the attention of Government; if, on the other hand, they are to be compelled to view with equal interest or indifference all modes of faith, to confound together every form of truth and every strange variety of error, to deal with circumstantial and with essential differences as being alike matter of no concern, to refuse their homage to the divine authority of truth; then, so far from the science of politics being, as the greatest philosophers of antiquity fondly proclaimed it, the queen and mistress of all other arts and discharging the noblest functions of the mind, it will be an occupation degrading in its practice and fitted rather for the very helots of society."

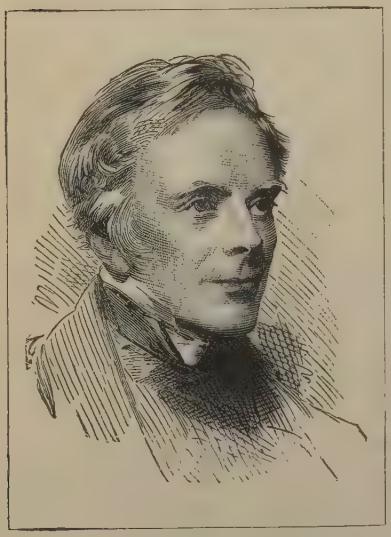
**The Oxford Movement.**

Mr. Gladstone was still, to all appearance, an Evangelical Churchman, untouched as yet by the Oxford Movement which had been inaugurated in 1833 by Keble's great sermon on National Apostasy. Mr. Gladstone indicated his earlier position in a conversation* which has been recorded by Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff in his lately-published memoirs. The conversation turned on Newman:—

"Gladstone said: 'I do not believe that there has been anything like his influence in Oxford, when it was at its height, since Abelard lectured in Paris. I myself, in my

* At a dinner given by Lord Ripon on March 13th, 1879.

undergraduate days, saw just the commencement of it. It was beginning to be the custom to go and hear him on Sunday afternoon at St. Mary's. At that time he was a Low Churchman, one of the very few in Oxford who dissented from the high and dry Anglicanism which was then the fashion.' 'Who represented it?' I asked. 'Well, Coplestone, perhaps, at its best; but, indeed, everyone except Newman, Pusey, who was supposed to lean to German Rationalism, and a very few others of less note.' 'Did Bishop Lloyd?' said Tom Hughes. 'Well, yes, in a sense,' replied Gladstone, 'but he was a man by himself. His early death was, perhaps, the greatest misfortune that has happened, in recent times, to the Church of England. He might have prevented a great deal if he had lived.'"



JOHN KEBLE.
*(From the Portrait by G. Richmond.)*

"When I left Oxford," said Mr. Gladstone to the biographer of Manning, "I should have said we were on smooth waters; there was no indication of the coming storm. From Thomas Mozley's 'Reminiscences' I first heard that in Oriel there was a movement going on at the time." There is nothing in the speech on the Irish Church to suggest that Mr. Gladstone had been in the least affected by the "Tracts for the Times." But he was not an extremist like Manning. 'On the occasion of a great meeting in 1835 or 1836, I think, called by Archbishop Howley—a revered man—in connection with the Christian Knowledge Society," Mr. Gladstone has told how he rubbed shoulders with Manning. The meeting, it should be said, had been called to restrain the extreme section of the Evangelicals, who had been getting the upper hand. "After a friendly exchange of greetings, I asked Manning what had brought him, a country clergyman, up to town. 'To defend,' was his answer, 'the Evangelical cause against the attempts of the Archbishop.'" *

Lord John Russell's resolution was carried by a majority of 33, and Sir Robert Peel resigned on April 8th, 1835. The king was forced to swallow his humiliation and put up with the return of the "once rejected but now triumphant" Whigs under Lord Melbourne. A fresh stimulus had been given to the party of Reform, which enabled them to bring forward the first great popular measure of Local Government. The Municipal Corporations Commission, which was appointed by Lord Grey's Government in 1833, had now completed its long and careful inquiry into the abuses and corruptions which prevailed almost without exception in the towns and cities of Great Britain. The report was "ordered to be printed" on March 30th, 1835. On June 5th Lord John Russell asked leave to bring in a Bill "to provide for the regulation of municipal corporations in England and Wales." Sir Robert Peel said he would

**Lord Melbourne's Return to Office, 1835.**

* Mr. Purcell's "Manning," vol. i., p. 116.

discuss the question fairly "without reference to its party bearings," and voted for the second reading; but he strongly objected to the changes which put the administration of charities and the licensing of public-houses into the hands of elected representatives of the ratepayers.

Mr. Gladstone spoke only once in the debates on the Municipal Corporations Bill, and then but briefly (July 20th, 1835). He said that having, like Sir Robert Peel, supported the second reading of the Bill, he felt bound by its principle, which he understood to be "the abrogation of the principle of self-election and the substitution of an open and liberal system of election." But—a large but—there were very few clauses in the Bill to which he could give his honest advocacy: "I cannot approve of the frequency of elections which must occur under this Bill. I cannot approve of the restriction which it imposes upon the prerogative of the Crown. I cannot approve of the extension of the power of licensing public-houses to individuals who are to be subjected to popular election."

**Speech on the Municipal Corporations Bill.**

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN PREACHING.

*(A Sketch in St. Mary's, Oxford.)*

The High Tories were furious at a measure which struck another heavy blow at the influence of landed proprietors in boroughs; but public opinion in the constituencies was so strong that they did not summon up courage to attack the Bill until it reached the House of Lords. A debate which arose soon afterwards in the Commons showed the drift of Mr. Gladstone's sympathies. The conduct of the House of Lords in mutilating the Municipal Corporations Act was causing the utmost exasperation among the Whigs and Radicals in the country; so that when, on August 21st, Spring Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in Supply that he should postpone the appropriation clauses for a week, there was great jubilation among the supporters of the Ministry, who, in spite of an official disclaimer, interpreted it as a warning to the House of Lords. Hume thought "that whilst the fate of any one of the three great measures now in the House of Lords remains undecided, it would be improper in the House of Commons to pass any more money clauses." He did not deny that both Houses possessed "independent powers;" but he thought that the people's representatives would not be justified in voting any more money Bills "until we see how the business of the House of Lords is disposed of." Otherwise "we might be placed in a position of which our constituents could not approve." O'Connell went a good deal further: "The people of England would be slaves indeed if

**Popular Feeling against the House of Lords.**

they did not insist on obtaining their rights. If ever the time should arrive when a body of 300 individuals, entirely irresponsible, should be suffered to prevent the correction of abuses and the redress of wrongs, that period would be a lamentable one for this country. I only anticipate the possibility of such a period arriving for the purpose of expressing my conviction that the people would ultimately prevail."

Mr. Gladstone's Defence of the Lords.

Mr. Gladstone at once rose, in Constitutionalist indignation, to say that he felt "in honour and conscience bound to state that there can be nothing more indiscreet, nothing more indecent—I will retract the word indecent and say nothing more indelicate—than for a Minister of the Crown to ground his postponement of a financial bill on the presumption * of the conduct that another branch of the Legislature will adopt with respect to certain legislative measures that are submitted to their consideration in their independent capacity; for they are as independent as this House, and as capable of exercising a sound judgment." Spring Rice was naturally irritated by this onslaught, as the official reason which he had assigned for postponement was that "the militia estimates were not yet voted." Accordingly he retorted that the honourable member's charges were as much misapplied as his Constitutional theories; and, seeing, no doubt, that the young Tory blood was boiling over with unpopular doctrines, he determined to get them published:—"I for one do not consider the character of a faithful Minister to the Crown to be incompatible with that of an independent representative in a free state. It is for the honourable member to draw that nice line of distinction." In short, he would "give the honourable member an opportunity of justifying at once the fairness of his attack and the tendency of his Tory doctrine—to draw a distinction between the obligations the Ministers owe to the Crown, and those which they owe to the people."

But Mr. Gladstone declined to enter into this "ample field of disquisition," professed himself satisfied with the explanation, was charmed to withdraw his imputation, but "begged to transfer the language which he had improperly applied to the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer" to the honourable member for Middlesex and the honourable and learned member for Dublin. The challenge was at once taken up:—

Mr. O'Connell: "I accept the transfer, and return it with contempt. I regard the honourable member's doctrine as exceedingly slavish. It is discreditable to make a traffic of politics, and speculate on the chance of changes."

Mr. Hume: "I am not willing to accept the transfer. . . . I do not question the powers of the other House. . . . It would probably be agreeable to the honourable member opposite and to the party with which he acts if the House were to separate before the business was done. They want to get possession of the public purse, as they

* This was hardly a presumption. On the previous Monday (August 17th), the House of Lords by enormous majorities had passed two of Lord Lyndhurst's most outrageous amendments to the Municipal Corporations Bill, one proposing "that one-sixth only of the municipal constituency, namely, the higher classes of ratepayers, should be eligible to be elected as town councillors," the other that one-fourth of the town council should consist of persons holding office for life, "either under the denomination of capital burgesses or aldermen." Fortunately the House of Commons stood firm.

have done already before—and a pretty use they make of it. At the present crisis Englishmen ought to speak out. The people of England will support this House, let the other House do as it pleases."

Then, at last, Mr. Gladstone was "drawn." The Chancellor of the Exchequer "had spoken of the doctrines of members on this side of the House. Now it is one of their Tory doctrines that each branch of the Legislature is independent—to judge and decide as it may think proper in every question brought before it, unbiassed by the opinion of other parties; but, at all events, bowing only to the majesty of the people, to the deliberative opinion of the free people of this empire, one of whose chief rights it is to have the opportunity, when accused, of defending themselves." He was confident that no Tory "would ever be induced to accept office for the mere purpose of holding the public purse, or any of those petty gains or ends which power might enable them to get, but which would be punished by the eternal pangs of their consciences." The postponement of the appropriation clause, now so satisfactorily explained, did at first appear extraordinary, "and because a young member like myself got up to notice the circumstance, the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not justified in censuring me in the manner he has done."

**The True Tory Doctrine.**

The interest of the debate continued. Thomas Attwood said that he had just come from a mass meeting of 10,000 people in Birmingham, at which one of the speakers said "that in the present progressive state of knowledge and diffusion of information, the time would shortly arrive when there would be no need either for a king or a House of Lords.' He added: "The shout of applause which followed this sentiment, I thought would have lifted the roof from the building." Horace Twiss, an old-fashioned Tory, wished to vindicate the people of England. It would be gross slander to identify them with these revolutionary orators. He himself had heard a member "of that class of persons to whom I have been adverting" who, after warning the Whig Ministers against adhering to their present "cautious course," had said of the revolutionaries, "Against them are the aristocracy, the gentry, the clergy; with them are only the virtuous people."

Fifty-nine years afterwards the same House which had tried so hard to destroy the Municipal Corporations Act sought to treat the Parish Councils Bill in a similar spirit. But on the later occasion Mr. Gladstone took a widely different course; his estimate of the relative value of the House of Lords and of local government had by that time altered.

For some time Mr. Gladstone made no further contribution of importance to Parliamentary debates. The loss of his mother, who died on September 23rd, 1835, and to whom he was devotedly attached, was a severe trial to him. From that time much of his thought and energy was devoted to the comfort and support of his father's declining years.

In the session of 1835 Mr. Gladstone did not take any prominent part, though he appeared once or twice as a free lance, in close co-operation with that Sir Robert Inglis whom Thorold Rogers cruelly selected to illustrate the theme—

> "Port made men Tories, muzzy, stupid, slow,
> With neither heads to think nor feet to go."

THE OLD HOUSE OF LORDS.

(*From the Aquatint by Rowlandson and Pugin*, 1823.)

These and the succeeding lines of the satire give one type of Mr. Gladstone's earliest political comrades—the men with whom he was forced to ally and on whom he was forced to rely in his earnest efforts to maintain intact the temporalities of the Anglican Church. But Mr. Gladstone never trusted solely, or even mainly, to State action; he was equally zealous and indefatigable in voluntary efforts to increase the efficiency of the Church which he was to serve throughout life with such unalterable devotion and fidelity.

Sir Robert Inglis.

In this year (1836) Roundell Palmer consulted him about the "Clergy reserves" for the support of an Anglican parochial system in Upper Canada. Having been Under-Secretary for the Colonies in the previous year, Mr. Gladstone knew better than Roundell Palmer the temper of Parliament towards fresh demands by the Church for State privileges, whether at home or across the seas. He read the letter "with painful interest," and made it evident by the elaborate and mysterious construction of his reply that nothing was to be expected from the Government. However, in the following year, when the hope of State support was given up, he joined, along with Richard Cavendish and Sir Walter Farquhar, an association called the Upper Canada Clergy Society, of which Roundell Palmer was at first an active member. In its brief life the society supplied more pamphlets to London than parsons to Upper Canada. The style of these compositions appears to have been ornate, and to have offended Mr. Gladstone's business instinct and his sense of literary propriety. Mr. Gladstone has so seldom appeared as a critic of style and as a pruner of other men's periods that Palmer's account deserves to be reproduced:—

The Anglican Church in Canada, 1836.

"I had composed in a much too florid and ambitious style (not justifying, I must confess, my Father's expectation of advantage from such attention as I might be able to pay to 'the verbiage' of the Society's communications) the draft of a letter, intended to be sent by the Committee to the Society's principal missionary. This Mr. Gladstone saw, and he spoke of it to me in terms of kindly-expressed criticism. 'Too good' were the words which he used, emphasising them so as to make it plain to me that the composition was not to his taste. I date from that criticism, of which I felt the justice, a dislike to an ambitious and rhetorical mode of writing which has since grown upon me and become a confirmed habit of my mind." *

Mr. Gladstone's manner of life at this time has been described by Mr. Russell:—"Living in chambers in the Albany (where he daily read family prayers with his two servants), he pursued the same even course of steady work, reasonable recreation, and systematic devotion which he had marked out for himself at Oxford. He went freely into society, dined out constantly, and was welcomed at musical houses for the cultivated beauty of his baritone." † He and Thomas (afterwards Sir Thomas) Acland, who survived Mr. Gladstone by a few days, were among the more serious members of Monckton Milnes' set, and would not attend Sunday evening entertainments. "I really think," wrote their would-be host to a friend, "when people keep Friday as a fast they might make a feast on Sunday!"

Private Life.

* "Memorials, Family and Personal." Roundell, Earl of Selborne. Vol. i., p. 220.
† Life of Gladstone, by G. W. E. Russell, p. 48.

In October, 1836, Mr. Gladstone spoke twice at Liverpool, and eulogised Peel, who had assumed office, he said, not from motives of expediency, but to maintain the integrity of the Established Church. On the second of these occasions—a Conservative Association dinner—Mr. Gladstone was referred to by a local Radical newspaper, the *Liverpool Chronicle*, as "the crack orator of the night." In the same print the editor, mixing metaphor with irony and both with vulgarity, offered his condolences to "the old gentleman at Fasque" (Mr. Gladstone's father), on having "so miscalculated his chances as to launch his sons on the losing side in the political arena." To Fasque Mr. Gladstone paid constant visits up to the death of his father, which occurred some fifteen years later.

On the 13th of January 1837, on the occasion of Sir Robert Peel's great speech at Glasgow, Mr. Gladstone was asked to respond to the toast of "the Conservative constituencies in England, and their representatives in Parliament." Four days later he was at Newark at a dinner given by the Tories of South Nottinghamshire to Lord Lincoln. At this time the Conservatives were particularly sore about the support which O'Connell and his Irish followers were giving Lord John Russell. The irritation was natural. Hitherto and thereafter—for this exceptional period was not to last long—the Whigs who sacrificed so much for the Irish Catholics could get no consistent support from their representatives. Perhaps O'Connell had profited by the chastisement which Macaulay had inflicted on him in 1833;* at any rate he was now earning the exclusive hatred of the Conservative party and of the Anglican Church. At Glasgow Mr. Gladstone had denounced him as the man who had misled and debased the Irish people with a view to the dissolution of the Union and the extinction of Protestantism. These things the English people would resist, though they would not refuse "justice to Ireland." At Newark Mr. Gladstone reasserted the need for resistance. He pleaded for a national party to defend at all risks the Church, the Throne, and the House of Lords, and claimed a monopoly of public spirit for the patriots whom Peel seemed likely to lead to victory in the near future:—"We have no under-game to play, no party, or paltry, or selfish ends to answer; our great object is to render our institutions productive of happiness and glory to millions of our countrymen, through many ages and future generations. We know

**O'Connell and the Tories, 1837.**

**Calling for a National Party.**

* "We are called base, and brutal, and bloody. Such are the epithets which the honourable and learned member for Dublin thinks it becoming to pour forth against the party to which he owes every political privilege that he enjoys. The time will come when history will do justice to the Whigs of England, and will faithfully relate how much they did and suffered for Ireland. I see on the benches near me men who might, by uttering one word against Catholic Emancipation—nay, by merely abstaining from uttering a word in favour of Catholic Emancipation—have been returned to this House without difficulty or expense, and who, rather than wrong their Irish fellow-subjects, were content to relinquish all the objects of their honourable ambition, and to retire into private life with conscience and fame untarnished. . . . I tell the honourable and learned gentleman, that the same spirit which sustained us in a just contest for him will sustain us in an equally just contest against him. Calumny, abuse, royal displeasure, popular fury, exclusion from office, exclusion from Parliament, we were ready to endure them all rather than that he should be less than a British subject. We never will suffer him to be more."

the efforts that have been made in Ireland against us, in that land which has been blessed by Heaven with abundant means for the enjoyment of freedom and virtue, more than any country on the face of the earth, but which the passions of men have rendered unhappy: and does not that justify us in the course we are taking, in devoting our whole energies to the maintenance of this noble cause? Does it not justify us in disclaiming selfishness and party views, and calling upon all our countrymen to join with us hand and heart, and to unite with us in the common cause of our religion and our country?"

FASQUE. *Photo: G. W. Wilson and Co., Aberdeen.*

This series of speeches increased Mr. Gladstone's reputation in the country and strengthened his position in the party. In the spring of 1837 an important debate arose upon some coercive measures proposed by Lord John Russell to deal with the Canadian rebellion. Roebuck and all the philosophic Radicals looked on them as unjustifiable infringements upon Canadian self-government. Mr. Gladstone did not regard the Colonies as emancipated from central government, though he would not say that emancipation was necessarily undesirable. On the contrary, there was a stage in their existence when the Colonies, like children, ought to be emancipated, and to this emancipation "their government ought to be prospectively adapted. But, on the other hand, I hold it to be perfectly vain and fallacious, and, I will add, dishonest, while separation is not proposed as the object in view, to claim for the Houses of Assembly in that country a character of entire equality with the Imperial Parliament in this: so

**Coercion for Canada.**

long as Canada continues a Colony, it must, from its very nature as such, continue in a certain sense subject to Great Britain. I had, indeed, hoped that our discussions on the repeal of the Union had set at rest the fallacious supposition that independent legislatures could permanently co-exist and co-operate under the same Crown." *

Church Rates.

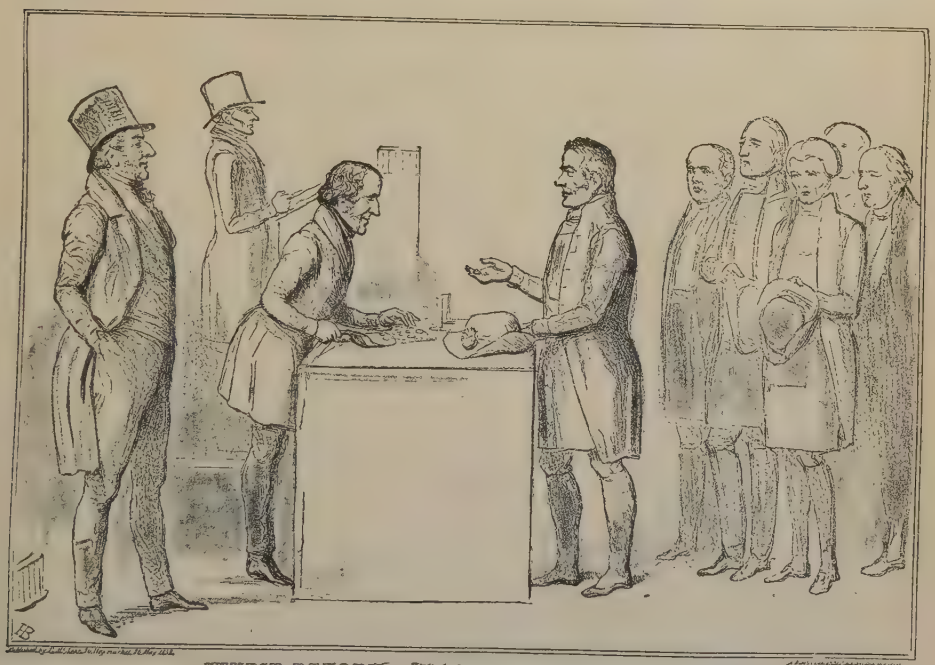
On the 3rd of March, 1837, Spring Rice introduced a scheme for the abolition of Church rates, which, however, was abandoned on account of the agitation of the bishops and the narrowness of the Ministerial majority in the House. Mr. Gladstone spoke in the adjourned debate of March 15th, and his speech was greatly admired by the Tory Press. He followed Edward Baines, the member for Leeds, an able and moderate advocate of Nonconformity in Parliament. Baines had quoted Blackstone and Sir Simon Degge in support of the quadripartite division of tithes and with a view to proving that under the law of that division the repairs of the church fell originally on the bishop and afterwards on the rector. Mr. Gladstone was thoroughly in his element. The fourth part obviously went to the bishop because at that period the Church "was in a missionary state," and the bishop's clergy "itinerated through the district." After this he left the honourable member to derive all the benefit he could from the admission that Judge Blackstone had alleged the quadripartite division to have prevailed "in the darkness of the Middle Ages." As for Sir Simon Degge, he wished the honourable member "had read a little further"; and asserted that during a period of more than five centuries it had been a matter of common-law right in England to throw the expenses of repairing the fabric of the church on the rated lands—a thesis which he supported by a somewhat hazardous quotation from Chief Justice Holt:—

"By the civil and canon law the parson is obliged to repair the whole Church, and it is so in all Christian countries but England; but by the peculiar laws of this country, the parishioners are charged with the repairs of the body of the Church."

But the most admired portion of his speech was that in which he dealt with conscientious scruples. The *Standard* regarded it as "a terrible reply" to Mr. Baines, as "a triumph of reasoning and eloquence." He had "completely disposed of Mr. Baines's superficial measurement of religious wants, doling out the opportunity of hearing the Gospel by the square foot, and of the hypocritical cant of conscience now raised at the end of two centuries of perfect acquiescence." Mr. Baines, it should be explained, had been guilty of the infamous suggestion that estimates of the necessity for affording church room should be made not from the number who *might* go to church, but from the number who were *disposed* to go. Mr. Gladstone's best sentences were certainly both sonorous and ingenious. His principle was this: "When the Legislature made a demand on its subjects for a part of their property, whatever might be the purpose to which it was applied, the demand of the Legislature absolved the conscience of the subjects." He was not satisfied with a view which many were disposed to take, "that the principle of an Established Church would be fully maintained by preserving to a particular form of religion the fixed endowments of which it was in possession." In his view the

* *Mirror of Parliament*, 1837, p. 527.

essential principle of an Establishment was this, "that it should carry home to the door of every man in the country who was willing to receive them the blessings of religion and the ordinances which its ministers were appointed to dispense." He would not, however, go, in his principle of the inviolability of Church property, to such an extreme degree as to say that the whole of its revenues should be maintained to the Establishment whether they were required or not. But at present the revenues were all needed. There was an idea that the amazing deficiency of spiritual instruction could be supplied by voluntary exertions. But



CHURCH REFORM or "THE BISHOP'S SATURDAY NIGHT"

Lord J. Russell and Mr. Spring Rice doling out money to the Archbishop of Canterbury and attendant bishops.

(*From a Cartoon by "H. B.," after a Design by Sydney Smith.*)

recent inquiries and efforts had shown that such a hope was delusive. The Bishop of London had stated that sittings in churches for 370,000 persons were required before the whole population of the metropolis could have an opportunity of attending public worship simultaneously in Anglican churches. How then, he would put it to the House, could a Christian legislature with propriety consent to pass a measure which would cut off every resource from which the Church could hope to mitigate this enormous evil, to inform the ignorance, to enlighten the religious darkness, and to prevent the crimes of its destitute members?

The doctrine that a State Church with a nominal membership of perhaps half the adult population ought to be capable of seating in any

given town at any given moment the whole of the inhabitants, men, women and children, could only have been propounded at a time when Mr. Gladstone's mind was overrun with the theories of Hooker and Hobbes and Warburton and Coleridge.

Mr. Gladstone was, indeed, too much occupied just now with religious projects and theological speculation to allow of his taking a very prominent part in the ordinary debates of Parliament; but he could not avoid a considerable amount of work and anxiety in connection with the treatment of black races in different parts of the world. He opposed a request by Hume for a return of the names of the slave-owners who had received compensation; but afterwards withdrew his opposition. The return showed that Sir John Gladstone was in excellent company, many peers and dignitaries of the Church having exchanged slaves for sovereigns. Already in March, 1836, Mr. Gladstone had been nominated to serve on a committee to inquire into the workings of the apprenticeship system. The report deprecated the flogging of women, but approved the apprenticeship system as the proper form of transition from slavery to freedom. Sir John Gladstone meanwhile was arranging to import coolies from Bengal. We need not go into the details of the long dispute which followed, and which dragged on until 1845, when Mr. Gladstone, as Colonial Secretary, finally settled the question. But the *Times* had taken up the case of the coolies; and Sir John Gladstone was not able satisfactorily to dispose of the charges brought against him. Buxton and the Abolitionists regarded the new move as a revival of slavery; and it appears to have been little better in its first manifestations.*

The Apprenticeship System.

Mr. Gladstone also worked hard on the Aborigines Committee which was appointed early in 1836, and reappointed in the following year. As a member of this committee, he took part in cross-examining a Kaffir chieftain and a missionary to the Hottentots, both of whom were full of complaints against the English colonists. John Williams, the missionary, said in his evidence before the commission that he would rather carry the Gospel to parts unvisited by Europeans than to those where intercourse with the white races had already been established. Mr. Gladstone was confident that it would be "practicable to devise a system of intercourse with the uncivilised tribes consonant to justice and humanity, and in unison with the high character of Great Britain." In their final report, agreed to by Mr. Gladstone and drawn up by Buxton, who was chairman, the committee, after a long and pious exordium, made some practical recommendations which certainly mark a turning-point in our treatment of uncivilised races. It was suggested that the Executive Government should be responsible for the protection of the aborigines, that the duration of labour contracts should be limited to one year, that the Empire should not be "expanded" without the sanction of the Home Government, that missionaries should be protected and assisted, and that the sale of spirits should be suppressed as far as possible. Thus began Mr. Gladstone's long connection with South Africa, of which the worst that his enemies could affirm was that he was more influenced by the claims of humanity than by the temptations of empire.

An Aborigines Committee.

* *Cf.* Mr. A. F. Robbins's "Early Public Life of W. E. Gladstone," pp. 258—76.

On the 20th of June, 1837, King William IV. died, and in accordance with a provision of the Constitution, since repealed, Parliament was dissolved. Mr. Gladstone was asked to stand for Manchester and was brought forward, although he declined to accept the invitation. It is not surprising that under these circumstances he was badly beaten.

However, he was re-elected without opposition for Newark on July 24th, and on the 9th of August the Manchester Conservatives showed by entertaining him at a public dinner that they bore no malice.

**Re-elected for Newark, 1837.**

His speech, which contained a long eulogy of the young Queen, was described by the *Manchester Guardian* as "a very dull and commonplace harangue," and by the *Manchester Chronicle* as "one of the most eloquent expositions of Conservative principles and policy that it has been our good fortune to listen to." Two days later he was on his way to Fasque "to see what grouse he could persuade into his bag."*

The new Parliament, which met in November, 1837, found the Liberals and Whigs still retaining a small majority. They soon showed their moral weakness by abandoning the Appropriation Clause in order to secure the assent of the House of Lords to their Irish Tithes Bill. On the 12th of December Mr. Gladstone was nominated to a Select Committee "to consider the best means of providing useful education for the children of the poorer classes in large towns throughout England and Wales." His friend Acland joined the committee in the following March. The report, which appeared in July, 1838, shows that his opinions were in an unformed and transitional state. Among those who gave evidence was Kay, then an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner, afterwards well known as Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth and as secretary to the Committee of the Privy Council on Education. Kay was an able advocate of the unsectarian system founded by Lancaster. In answer to questions propounded by Mr. Gladstone and others, he insisted on the importance of raising the social status and intellectual qualifications of elementary schoolmasters. But he was opposed to free education, on grounds which are indicated by a question of Mr. Gladstone's: "Is your reason for forming that opinion the idea that it may render the parents less alive to the value of the means that may be offered, than they would be if they were called upon to make some payments?" Mr. Gladstone's queries were largely directed to discovering the main "obstructions" which lay in the way of extending popular education through the National Church, and generally to the wisdom of the equivalents which, in addition to money payments, the National Society demanded from Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, and Jews. The "spiritual price" which Jewish and Roman Catholic parents paid for the education of their children at this time consisted in the indoctrination of the Scriptures by Anglican teachers. For the benefit of Nonconformist children, whose parents might for the sake of education have waived this point, the society insisted almost universally upon attendance at church. Upon these obnoxious and irritating provisos

**The New Parliament, 1837.**

**Elementary Education.**

* See a letter from Mr. Gladstone to Monckton Milnes, dated Liverpool, August 11, 1837, in Sir Wemyss Reid's Life of Lord Houghton.

Mr. Gladstone extracted a good deal of information; and he eventually signed a report admitting the great deficiency of opportunities for education among the working classes, and modestly urging that the means of daily education ought to be provided for at least one-eighth of the population. But he opposed the establishment of a "Board or Office of Education" under the control of Parliament, and agreed that "the difficulties attendant on the framing a general system of education for the children of the humbler classes—difficulties almost wholly arising from differences of religious opinion"—were such as the efforts of the Executive Government could not successfully remove.

Later in the year, during Mr. Gladstone's absence abroad, Samuel Wilberforce wrote: "We are now very busy ordering a Diocesan Board for National Education after the notions of Acland, Wood, Gladstone, and all that party of young men who have been moving the subject in London. . . . It is, I believe, a vital question for the Church." This explains what was Mr. Gladstone's real aim, and the reason why he and his friends opposed the establishment of a Board of Education. The report had advocated the extension of State grants to the different voluntary societies; and Mr. Gladstone hoped that by the organisation of a Diocesan Board and the improvement and reform of the Church schools by means of this central agency, the citizens of the State might eventually be not only educated, but educated by the State Church. Mrs. Austin, who was working zealously in the cause of education, though without the same ecclesiastical bias, described him as "a distinguished Tory who wants to re-establish education, based on the Church, in quite a Catholic form;" but added: "He has, however, clear ideas, zeal, and conscientiousness. We get on extremely well together." This was in February, 1839. On the 31st of December, 1838, she had written at more length to Victor Cousin:—

"There is a certain party of young men (clergymen and others), all Tories and High Churchmen, who have, it seems, had the sense to see that the schools of the National School Society (which as you know have long represented the bigoted party) are bad enough and ridiculous enough to discredit their supporters. From what I hear, they are going to try and reform the Church schools, to insist upon better instruction, and to try and place them on a par with the best liberal schools; always retaining religion (Anglican of course) as the principal thing. These gentlemen appear to me to have faith in their religion, and not to be afraid of a little secular teaching. The man who is at the head of this movement is Mr. Gladstone, a Member of Parliament, who is regarded as the probable successor of Peel, *i.e.* the leader of the Tory party."*

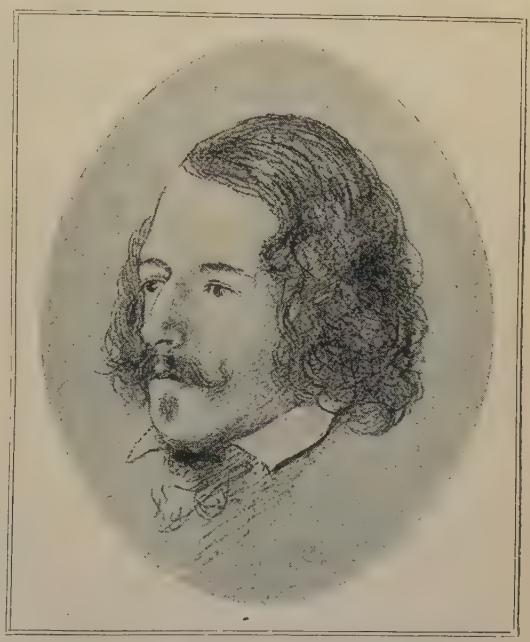
Mr. Gladstone was not neglecting the pleasures of society. Here he was welcome for his musical talents, there for his political convictions or religious earnestness, everywhere for the charm of his manners and conversation. His bachelor life in the Albany must have been very happy. Wordsworth often visited him; and Doyle tells how at breakfast "the great poet sat in state, surrounded by young and enthusiastic admirers," and how "his conversation was very like the 'Excursion' turned into vigorous prose." Mr. Gladstone was struck by the poet's "simplicity, kindness, and freedom from the worldly type." About this time the life-long and

**Visits from Wordsworth.**

*Janet Ross, "Three Generations of Englishwomen," vol. i., p. 125.

highly-prized friendship with Tennyson began. "It was about the year 1837," he wrote to Mr. Hallam Tennyson, "when he called on me in Carlton Gardens. This was an unexpected honour, for I had no other tie with him than having been in earlier life the friend of his friend, to whom he afterwards erected so splendid a literary monument. I cannot now remember particulars, but I still retain the liveliest impression of both the freedom and kindness with which he conversed with me during a long interview." But another and more tender affection was now beginning to ripen. The incident to which the following story refers probably belongs to the spring of 1838. "Lady Farnborough (widow of Sir Erskine May, Clerk to the House of Commons) lived in the early part of her widowhood at a private hotel—Glossop's, in York Street, St. James's Square. I several times met Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone there at small dinners. On the first of these occasions—somewhere about 1888—Mr. Gladstone, after gazing round the drawing-room, said to Mrs. Gladstone, 'When were you here last?' or, 'Were you ever in this room before?' She replied 'Never.' He said: 'Think again. Don't you remember the musical parties which Lady Theresa Lister used to give in this house, and a young member of Parliament whose singing you admired?'" * The admiration soon become mutual. But we must not anticipate events, or do more than intimate the approach of the happiest event in a long and happy life.

A Call from Tennyson.



EARLY PORTRAIT OF TENNYSON.

(*By Richard Doyle.*)

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone was increasing his reputation as a Parliamentary debater. On Monday, January 22nd, 1838, Grote moved, "That J. A. Roebuck, Esq., agent of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada, be heard at the bar of the House against the Bill for making temporary provision for the government of Lower Canada." In a short discussion, which had arisen five days earlier, both Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell had been at a loss. They wished Roebuck to be heard, but were afraid of creating an awkward precedent. Mr. Gladstone now, following Grote,

The Canadian Rebellion (1838).

* The story was told to the present writer by Mr. George Russell. Lady Theresa married as her second husband Sir George Cornewall Lewis.

dissected the difficulty with his usual skill and even more than his usual subtlety, and found a solution agreeable to both Peel and Russell. It was expedient, he argued, to hear Mr. Roebuck on account of his knowledge of Canadian affairs, but it was inexpedient to recognise him as the agent of the House of Assembly. Grote had quoted the precedent of a Mr. Limburner, who was heard in 1791. "It appears, however, to me that the two cases differ in very material particulars. The first is this: Mr. Limburner represented the whole province and its common interest. There was no division, no dissension, as to the topics he should urge. The second and more important point of difference was that Mr. Limburner was unquestionably deputed by the community, or a large portion of it representing the whole, and deputed *pro hac vice*, for that very case." But in the present instance Roebuck was pleading "a general title of agency." Mr. Gladstone then produced what he called "mixed considerations" for allowing Roebuck to be heard, quoting the precedent of the Municipal Corporations Bill, when counsel were heard* against it at the bar of the House of Lords. He therefore suggested that Roebuck should be heard, but that the description of him "as agent to the House of Assembly" should be struck out of Grote's motion. Lord John Russell and Lord Stanley both thanked Mr. Gladstone for his speech. The suggestion was apparently accepted, and Roebuck was allowed to speak. Charles Buller, however, objected to Roebuck being heard, either in his individual capacity or in no capacity at all; but he had misinterpreted Mr. Gladstone, who at once rose to explain that he had not recommended the House to hear Mr. Roebuck in his individual capacity, but rather "to make Mr. Roebuck an agent for the purpose of giving him a claim to be heard." This trifling incident may serve, at any rate, to illustrate the dictum that Mr. Gladstone might have been, had he liked, either Lord Chancellor or Archbishop of Canterbury.

So Roebuck was heard, and read a long address, which was received somewhat coldly—a circumstance which accounts for Francis Place's enthusiastic approval: "I at least honour you." On the following day, Mr. Gladstone replied to Roebuck in a sarcastic vein, attacking the Philosophic Radicals for their change of front. A duel had already occurred between Grote and Bulwer in which the historian had called the novelist "a literary Whig." Mr. Gladstone's speech is remarkable for the vigour of his argument and for the vehemence of the criticism which he directs against Roebuck, Grote, Hume, Molesworth, and the rest of the Philosophical Radicals. After detailing a long list of the motherly kindnesses bestowed by Great Britain upon her ungrateful Colony, Mr. Gladstone asked whether there was left anything deserving to be called a grievance in Canada. "If there be, I would proceed immediately to redress it, caring not whether rebellion is rearing its head in triumph, instead of sinking into extinction." The term "Little Englander" was not then invented; but Mr. Gladstone brought an even worse charge against the Utilitarian School of Philosophical Radicals. Hume's speech came, he declared, to this, that "rebellion was only to be justified where it was successful, and where successful was always justifiable." Next, he

**An Attack on the Philosophical Radicals.**

* For purely obstructive reasons.

severely blamed the Executive for a lack of ordinary vigilance and discretion at the time when the rebellion began; but towards the end of his speech he was tempted to return to the Radicals in order to discharge that most effective of all the fireworks then known to Parliamentary oratory—a Latin quotation. The Irish Coercion Bill, he reminded them, was most obstinately resisted; but now, "when I see a Bill before us which will interfere in a tenfold greater degree and extent with constitutional privileges, and yet perceive that there are scarcely six men in the House (and they were discovered by Mr. Roebuck who is out of it) who object to this alarming Bill, I ask myself with astonishment, How is this? It really seems as if the name of Lord Durham* had produced a most extraordinary sensation—as if it had acted like magic on certain honourable gentlemen. When I find at this moment that that Noble Person, gleaming on them like a phantom through the storm, appears to still their jealous and eager vehemence, the effect reminds me irresistibly of the rising of the twin stars of old—

"'Concidunt venti fugiuntque nubes.'"

J. A. ROEBUCK.

On the 7th of March, 1838, in a closely argued speech, Mr. Gladstone defended Lord Aberdeen, and exposed "the feebleness and vacillation" of the Ministers. There could be no doubt, he said, that the Executive in Canada had failed in the great duty of maintaining the peace of the province. It was true that the rebellion was crushed; but that result had only been attained by a great sacrifice of human life. It must not be forgotten that hundreds had fallen victims in the strife, and that sorrow and solitude reigned in many a cottage. Why had not such scenes been prevented by the rigid enforcement of the law? To this plain and simple question he believed it was not in the power of the Government to give a satisfactory answer, and he therefore thought the House was bound to adhere to the amendment moved by the noble lord (Sandon), unless it were thought that Ministerial responsibility should be nothing but a mere name, and that misgovernment to any extent might be perpetrated with impunity.

Spring Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who followed, at once composed an Irish bull and conveyed a compliment. The latter, however, must be discounted if we are to accept as true that "genuine but indiscriminating cordiality of temper" which is commonly attributed to him. There was always, he said, a great satisfaction in rising after the hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone), for, however widely he might differ in opinion from the Government, not one word escaped from his lips calculated

* Lord Durham had been appointed Governor-General of Canada with extraordinary powers at the beginning of the year.

to give pain, or to infuse into the debate any needless asperity. But with respect to the speech to which it now became his painful duty to refer—— Here Hansard, evidently touched by the humour of the situation, closes the sentence with "loud laughter." On the same night Mr. Gladstone made a retort so neat and epigrammatic that it deserves to be rescued from obscurity. He was upholding the patriotism of his own side against the attacks of the Under-Secretary, Sir George Grey, who "went on, Sir, to designate those with whom I usually vote as an Opposition powerful in numbers, but not very scrupulous as to its means or measures. He will permit me to tell him, however, that, had our scruples been less, our numbers would have been more."

**A Neat Retort.**

On March 30th, 1838, an important debate arose upon Sir George Strickland's motion to anticipate the end of the Apprenticeship System by two years. This proposal Mr. Gladstone vehemently and successfully opposed in the interests of the planters: "I am aware," he admitted, "that I must speak under prepossessions, though I have striven with all my might against them; and I desire that no jot or tittle of weight may be given to my professions or assertions; by the facts I will stand or fall. And oh, Sir, with what depth of desire have I longed for this day! Sore, and wearied, and irritated, perhaps, with the grossly exaggerated misrepresentations and with the utter calumnies that have been in active circulation, without the means of reply, how do I rejoice to meet them in free discussion before the face of the British Parliament!"

**The Apprenticeship System, 1838.**

"A first-rate speech in defence of the planters," is Greville's comment. "He converted or determined many adverse or doubtful votes." James Grant, a well-known journalist, was vastly impressed, and did the member for Newark the honour of incorporation in "The British Senate in 1838." The very mediocrity of the writer gives a quotable value to his estimate:—

**An Early Appreciation.**

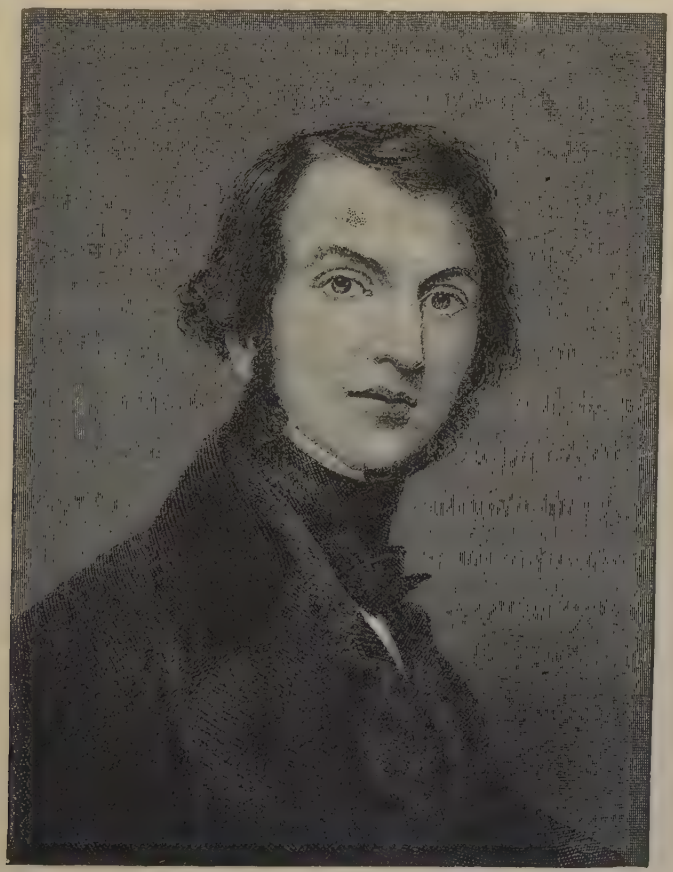
"Mr. Gladstone, the member for Newark, is one of the most rising young men on the Tory side of the House. His party expect great things from him; and certainly, when it is remembered that his age is only thirty-five,* the success of the Parliamentary efforts he has already made justifies their expectations. He is well informed on most of the subjects which usually occupy the attention of the Legislature; and he is happy in turning his information to good account. He is ready on all occasions which he deems fitting ones with a speech in favour of the policy advocated by the party with whom he acts. His extempore resources are ample. Few men in the House can improvise better. It does not appear to cost him an effort to speak."

But by way of showing how dangerous it is to assume the *rôle* of political prophet, here is a second passage from the same pen, which is somewhat diverting; for if we collate it with the first we are forced to the conclusion that the most rising young men of the Tory party could not hope to become great statesmen:—

"He is a man of very considerable talent, but has nothing approaching to genius. His abilities are much more the result of an excellent education and of mature study than of any prodigality of Nature in the distribution of her mental gifts. I have no idea that he will ever acquire the reputation of a great statesman. His views are not sufficiently

*A mistake. Mr. Gladstone was only twenty-nine at this time.

profound or enlarged for that; his celebrity in the House of Commons will chiefly depend on his readiness and dexterity as a debater, in conjunction with the excellence of his elocution, and the gracefulness of his manner when speaking. His style is polished, but has no appearance of the effect of previous preparation. He displays considerable acuteness in replying to an opponent; he is quick in his perception of anything vulnerable in the speech to which he replies, and happy in laying the weak point bare to the gaze of the House. He now and then indulges in sarcasm, which is, in most cases, very felicitous. He is plausible even when most in error.



W. E. GLADSTONE AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-ONE.

*(From the Portrait by Joseph Severn.)*

Grant adds to the character sketch and political forecast a description of Mr. Gladstone's person and manner:—

"Mr. Gladstone's appearance and manners are much in his favour. He is a fine-looking man. He is about the usual height, and of good figure. His countenance is mild and pleasant, and has a highly intellectual expression. His eyes are clear and quick. His eyebrows are dark and rather prominent. There is not a dandy in the House but envies what Truefitt would call, his 'fine head of jet-black hair.' It is always carefully parted

from the crown downwards to his brow, where it is tastefully shaded. His features are small and regular, and his complexion must be a very unworthy witness, if he does not possess an abundant stock of health. Mr. Gladstone's gesture is varied, but not violent. When he rises, he generally puts both his hands behind his back, and having there suffered them to embrace each other for a short time, he unclasps them, and allows them to drop on either side. They are not permitted to remain long in that locality, before you see them again closed together, and hanging down before him. Their reunion is not suffered to last any length of time. Again a separation takes place, and now the right hand is seen moving up and down before him. Having thus exercised it a little, he thrusts it into the pocket of his coat, and then orders the left hand to follow its example. Having granted them a momentary repose there, they are again put into gentle motion; and in a few seconds they are seen reposing *vis-à-vis* on his breast. He moves his face and body from one direction to another, not forgetting to bestow a liberal share of his attention on his own party. He is always listened to with much attention by the House, and appears to be highly respected by men of all parties."

In the earlier edition of "The British Senate" Mr. Gladstone had not been so much as mentioned. The growth of his reputation may be further illustrated by a letter from Wilberforce, the future Bishop of Oxford, dated April 20th, 1838:—

**Counsel from Samuel Wilberforce.**

"It would be an affectation in you, which you are above, not to know that few young men have the weight you have in the House of Commons, and are gaining rapidly throughout the country. Now I do not wish to urge you to consider this as a talent for the use of which you must render an account, for so I know you do esteem it, but what I want to urge upon you is that you should calmly look far before you; see the degree of weight and influence to which you may fairly, if God spares your life and powers, look forward in future years, and thus act *now* with a view to *then*. There is no height to which you may not fairly rise in this country. If it pleases God to spare us violent convulsions and the loss of our liberties, you may at a future day wield the whole government of this land; and if this should be so, of what extreme moment will your *past steps* then be to the real usefulness of your high station! If there has been any compromise of principle before, you will not then be able to rise above it; but if all your steps have been equal, you will not then be expected to descend below them. I say this to you in the sad conviction that almost all our public men act from the merest expediency; and that from this conventional standard it must be most difficult for one living and acting amongst them to keep himself clear; and yet from the conviction, too, that as yet you are wholly uncommitted to any low principles of thought or action. I would have you view yourself as one who may become the head of all the better feelings of this country, the maintainer of its Church and of its liberties, and who must now be fitting himself for this high vocation."

To which Mr. Gladstone replies, after indulging in some mournful prognostications as to "our probable public destinies during the term to which our natural lives may extend":—

"Not that these feelings are unmixed; they are tempered, even as regards the period of which I speak, with confident anticipations of new developments of religious power which have been forgotten in the day of insidious prosperity, and seem to be providentially reserved for the time of our need, for the swelling of Jordan; and of course there lies beyond that period, for those who are appointed to it, a haven of perfect rest; but still the coming years bear to my view an aspect of gloom for the country —not for the Church; she is the land of Goshen. Looking, however, to the former, to the State as such, and to those who belong to it as citizens, I seem unable to discern resources bearing a just proportion to her dangers and necessities. While the art of politics from day to day embraces more and more vital questions, and enters into closer relations with the characters and therefore the destinies of men, there is, I fear, a falling away in the intellectual stature of the generation of men whose office

is to exercise that art for good. While public men are called by the exigencies of their position to do more and more, there seems to be in the accumulation of business, the bewildering multiplication of details, an indication of their probable capacity to do less and less. The principles of civil government have decayed amongst us as much, I suspect, as those which are ecclesiastical; and one does not see an equally ready or sure provision for their revival. One sees in actual existence the apparatus by which our institutions are to be threatened, and the very groundwork of the national character to be broken up; but upon the other hand, if we look around for the masses of principle, I mean of enlightened principle, blended with courage and devotion, which are the human means of resistance, *these* I feel have yet to be organised, almost to be created."

The allusion to the "new developments of religious power" refers, of course, to the Tractarian movement, and indicates the change which had been coming over Mr. Gladstone's mind during the last two years. It is true that Newman had claimed as early as November, 1833, that Mr. Gladstone had joined the Tractarians. But the paper forces of the Oxford movement were at all times enormously strong. And the confidence of the leaders was reflected, for a time at least, by some of the lesser men. Thus Frederic Rogers wrote on July 2nd, 1836:—"My dear Newman,—Wood is most sanguine and eager to know every one who holds out prospects of being bettered. He nods his head and says: 'Do you know, Rogers, I do not see why we should not absorb *all* young Evangelicals,'" etc. etc. Mr. Gladstone, however, was never willing to admit that he had been quite absorbed.

**Approximating to Tractarianism.**

Of the almost innumerable debates which sprang up in Parliament during this period upon the great question of the State endowment of religion, perhaps the most instructive and amusing is that of July 30th, 1838, in Committee of Supply, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Spring Rice, moved a vote of £8,928 for the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth. The grant, it should be said, was agreed to without a division after only about a score of speeches. But two of these fell from Mr. Gladstone, who joined the protest of "the three colonels." Of this gallant trio, "two," in the words of Mr. Fitzpatrick, "looked as if they had never need to shave," while the third was "all beard." Colonel Sibthorp opposed the grant as "inconsistent with the Protestant religion," Colonel Perceval because it "had caused much excitement in England." The hostility of the latter had been increased by a recent election, which had shown him that "the conduct of the gentlemen educated at Maynooth" had been such as to prove the need for amendment in the system of education there pursued. Instead of promoting peace and harmony they instigated revolt and tumult. "He himself had been the subject of attack, and his political conduct had been canvassed," both before and after the election, "in every chapel but one." These terrible allegations were driven home by Colonel Verner, who attacked Maynooth as an institution "subversive of morality," and read aloud to the House a speech delivered by a priest, Father Doyle by name, who had received his education in that seminary. The speaker had declared his determination to oppose any Tithe Bill which did not go to the entire abolition of tithes. And this in the presence of a magistrate named Hawkshaw! Colonel Verner "wished to ask the noble lord opposite

**The Maynooth Grant (1833).**

whether he had struck, or intended to strike, the name of that magistrate out of the commission of the peace for listening to such a speech."

An opening such as this was not likely to be neglected by O'Connell. He laughed at the anti-tithe meeting; he mocked at the timidity of the three colonels; "he was sorry that the three gallant colonels opposite, the church militant, he supposed, of that House, had not the courage to divide against this grant. . . . they only talked—they would not divide." At this point the three military members were seen to confabulate. "Now," exclaimed O'Connell, "there is a council of war holding among the three honourable and gallant members, and let us see what the result will be. Oh! these gallant colonels; I must venture a parody against them:—

O'Connell and the Three Colonels.

"Three Colonels in three distant countries born,
Did Lincoln, Sligo, and Armagh adorn;
The first in gravity of face surpassed,
In grace the second, sobriety the last;
The force of Nature could no further go;
To beard the first she shaved the other two."

It has been alleged that the "famous epigram," as Mr. Gladstone has called it, was composed by Ronayne, and pirated by O'Connell, to whom it had been submitted. But Mr. Gladstone, in recalling the incident, discredited the statement, which was after all only made on hearsay by Canon O'Rorke: "I saw him [O'Connell] with a pencil and piece of paper noting down something before he rose." Mr. Gladstone would naturally remember the speech well; for the last sentence, which described the grant as a "paltry return" for the million they gave to the Protestant clergy of Ireland, brought him on to his legs, though not until Colonel Sibthorp had put in his own crushing reply: "I will merely say that I pay just as much attention to what falls from the honourable and learned member for Dublin, as I do to the cackling of any goose"! The report in the *Mirror* continues:—

Mr. Gladstone: "The honourable and learned member for Dublin boasts of having given £1,000,000 to the Protestant clergy of Ireland. Will the honourable and learned gentlemen be kind enough to inform the House of the sum which he has been instrumental in withholding from them?"

Mr. O'Connell: "Hear, hear, hear!"

Mr. Gladstone: "If we are pledged to the maintenance of the Protestant Church in Ireland, then it is a bad principle to grant a sum of money to a college for the inculcation of doctrines at variance with those of the Establishment. But if on the other hand the principle be good, nothing can be meaner, or more paltry, than to dole out so miserable an allowance. I think discussions of this kind are most painful, and unsatisfactory to all parties. The question should be brought at once to a definite issue."

Thus rapidly had Mr. Gladstone brought the debate from gay to grave; and the *odium theologicum*, having been once fairly imported,

* The above is Hansard. The *Mirror of Parliament* reads—

"In sobriety the second, in grace the last."

And another reading is—

"The next in bigotry—in both the last."

This last is probably an emendation by some patriot who thought that Daniel O'Connell's verses ought to scan.

could not easily be eliminated. Viscount Morpeth followed. He did not feel it incumbent upon him "at that time of day" to defend the origin of a grant "which was recommended by Mr. Burke, established by Mr. Pitt, sanctioned by Mr. Perceval, and dignified by the Royal Protestant assent of George III." But, aware no doubt that Mr. Gladstone was rapidly discarding his Evangelical opinions for those of the Oxford Tractarians, Morpeth could not refrain from firing a shot which was sure to do execution in the Tory ranks: "If honourable

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

(*From the Portrait by Sir D. Wilkie.*)

gentlemen are always talking of the objectionable doctrines taught at Maynooth, they must not be surprised if they sometimes hear of the not very satisfactory doctrines which have recently become fashionable at Oxford. A work of one of the most promising disciples of the new school, which, we are given to understand, is spreading and multiplying itself in every direction in the University of Oxford, has recently been published since the death of its author, by the great leader of that school, the Rev. Mr. Newman. I will give the House one or two extracts from the work:—

"You will be shocked at my avowal that I am every day becoming a less and less loyal son of the Reformation."

At this there were cries of "Name!" and Lord Morpeth continued: "The name of the author is Froude,* a most acomplished gentleman, now unfortunately no more." The extract was then continued. It is too lengthy to reproduce; but one or two sentences will explain its immediate effect—why Mr. Gladstone and the thermometer rose so suddenly:—

"I think people are injudicious who talk against the Roman Catholics for worshipping saints, and honouring the Virgin and images, etc. These things may perhaps be idolatrous—I cannot make up my mind about it. . . . We are Catholics without the Popery, and Church of England men without the Protestantism. . . . Your trumpery principle about Scripture being the sole rule of faith in fundamentals . . . is but a mutilated edition. . . . Really I hate the Reformation and the Reformers more and more, and have almost made up my mind that the rationalist spirit they set afloat is the ψευδο-προφήτης [False Prophet] of the Revelations."

"Really, Sir," continued the Whig viscount, after finishing a quotation which would, he well knew, at any rate damage the member for Newark in the eyes of most of his political allies, "while I read these extracts, I think honourable gentlemen would do well to look at home before they cast forth their missiles, and I could well wish that they would look at the errors of others in something like a reciprocal and a Christian spirit of kindness." We can imagine the fury with which Mr. Gladstone rushed again into the fray. Even the dumb pages of the *Mirror* give some blurred notion of the storm, just as condensed food sometimes suggests to the palate a faint reminiscence of its supposed originals. "I never," he ejaculated, "heard a speech more cruelly unjust than that just made by the noble lord. Even if Roman Catholic principles were inculcated in the University of Oxford, that fact has properly no relation to the question; but I have no hesitation in characterising the assertion as a mere vulgar calumny. I have to complain of the manner in which the noble lord has treated the book from which he has thought proper to read extracts. If the noble lord will read the preface of the book he has quoted, he will find that the editor expressly guarded himself against being supposed to entertain the opinions of the author, and stated that he gave it to the world as the singular production of a remarkable mind. But such is the justice of the noble lord! He selects particular passages only to serve his purpose! I do contend that such a course is grossly unjust.

**Mr. Gladstone and Lord Morpeth.**

Lord Morpeth "could not discover any transgression of which he had been guilty that should call forth so sore a reply from his honourable friend." Sir Robert Inglis, who also was incensed at the introduction of Oxford University into the debate, protested against the work being regarded as an exposition of the collective academic mind. Colonel Sibthorp was still suffering too much from the cackling of the Irish goose to be able to follow the later theological developments. He again got up, somewhat irrelevantly, at this point, to explain that "as to what fell from the honourable and learned member opposite, I think I shall best consult my own station in society by abstaining from any reply to such trash"! Meanwhile, the great Irishman who had immortalised the three gallant colonels must have been enjoying himself hugely. He presently expressed his mild surprise and regret at the theological hurricane which had swept

* Hurrell Froude.

the House; and soon afterwards a remarkable wrangle ended, the vote being agreed to without a division.

In the present chapter we are concerned with the political rather than the theological side of Mr. Gladstone's ecclesiastical views. But this was the great period of development. Though the pressure brought to bear upon him was enormous, Mr. Gladstone distinguished himself honourably in the turmoil of religious emotions by steadily refusing to give up his independence. His religion was his own, and he was determined to build it up for himself and by himself. Through 1837 and the early months of 1838 he was supplementing his previous studies in Patristic literature and ecclesiastical theory. "I remember," so an old friend of Mr. Gladstone wrote to the present author, "when he was lodging in the Albany I found him reading St. Augustine's 'De Civitate Dei.' Some years afterwards, at Hawarden, I reminded him of this when we were talking of serious religious difficulties. He said: 'Oh, yes, I remember; but it is not in that book you get his mind.' I said, 'But what, then, do you refer to?' He said: 'Oh, I have read all St. Augustine's controversial works.' At the same time he told me that the four writers to whom he owed most were Aristotle, St. Augustine, Dante, and Bishop Butler." In these studies, and in his active sympathy with the Anglican revival, he contracted a passionate attachment for the idea of a spiritually independent Church. But his early training, and the habits of political thought which he had inherited and acquired, debarred him from the adoption of the Liberal idea of a politically independent State. Accordingly, in his first and most famous book, which, as its title signifies, is primarily political,* he set himself to construct such a theory of ecclesiastical polity as would involve a completely spiritual as well as a completely established Church. The apparent antitheses were harmonised by the assumption of a middle term, that the State has a conscience, and a conscience which can and ought to cognise religious truth and error, and, moreover—subject to certain limitations and conditions—to use its authority and sanctions to propagate the one and to depress the other.

Ecclesiastical Views.

"The State in its Relations with the Church (1838)."

In the actual writing of the book James Hope† seems to have acted as sole critic and adviser. Three of Mr. Gladstone's letters will suffice to show the pains which were taken alike by critic and by author:—

"House of Commons; July 18, 1838.

"MY DEAR HOPE,—I hope in a day or two to get my Colonial information sufficiently in form, and then send you my whole papers. If you let them lie just as they are,

* "The State in its Relations with the Church."

† "One of W. E. Gladstone's friends and great swans," as a common friend called him, with a touch of perhaps pardonable jealousy. By those who cannot tolerate the thought that a great man's greatest friend should not himself be great, some comfort may be derived from the portrait of Hope painted by Lord Selborne in the "Memoirs" (vol. i., p. 300): "He united a peculiar charm and refinement of person and manners with a strong character and an acute, well-balanced intellect. His subsequent change of religious communion, together with a fastidious temperament, led him to prefer the unambitious but lucrative occupation of the Parliamentary Bar, in which he obtained undisputed pre-eminence, to the struggles of public life. If it had been otherwise he might very probably have risen to the highest political station."

turning the leaves over one by one, I think you will not find the manuscript difficult to make out, though it is strangely cut in pieces and patched. I have divided it all into *sectiuncules*, occupying generally from half a page to a whole one.

"I hope that its general tendency will meet your approval; but a point about which I am in great doubt, and to which I request your particular attention, is whether either the work or some of the chapters are not so deficient in clearness and arrangement as to require being absolutely re-written before they can with propriety be published? Making allowance for any obscurity which may arise from its *physical* state as a MS., I hope you will look vigorously at it in this point of view, and tell me what you think is the amount of the disease, and the proper kind of remedy. I can excuse myself, considering the pressure of other engagements, for having written irregularly and confusedly upon a subject very new in many of its parts, and requiring some abstraction—(at every turn it has brought home the truth of Bacon's observation, that politics are of all sciences the most immersed in matter. One has to go on detaching, as it were, one's soul from clay all the way through)—but I should be inexcusable if I were to *publish* in such a state: between my eyes and my business I fear it would be hard for me to re-write, but if I could put it into the hands of any other person who could, and who would extract from my papers anything worth having, that might do. I wish very much that something would be published by somebody on the subject, and that speedily, to begin to draw attention to a subject on which men's minds are so sadly undisciplined. When set in motion the ball will roll, as I anticipate.

"As regards myself, if I go on and publish, I shall be quite prepared to find some persons surprised, but this, if it should prove so, cannot be helped; I have not knowingly exaggerated anything; and when a man expects to be washed overboard, he must tie himself with a rope to the mast.

"I shall trust to your friendship for *frankness* in the discharge of your irksome task. Pray make verbal corrections without scruple where they are needed.—Sincerely yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

"July 21, 1838.

"MY DEAR HOPE,—Behold your rashness!

'Please read Nos. II., V., and VI. first. These, with VIII., are, I think, the most important, and it is about these that I am in great fear and doubt whether they may not require re-writing; as, however, we read that chopping old somebody made him young I have some hope for my unfortunate papers, which you will find have pretty well undergone that operation. Mind to turn the leaves as they lie.—Ever yours,

"W. E. G."

"July 26, 1838.

"MY DEAR HOPE,—I thank you most cordially for your remarks, and I rejoice to find that you act so entirely in the spirit I had anticipated. I trust you will continue to speak with freedom,* which is the best compliment as well as the best service you can render me. . . .

". . . . As I said before, I think it very probable that you may find that V. and VI. require quite as rigorous treatment as II., and I am very desirous to set both my mind and eyes at liberty before I go to the Continent, which I can now hardly expect to do before the first week in September. This interval I trust would suffice—unless you find that the other chapters stand in equal need.

"Mahon suggested as a title: 'Church and State considered in their connection.' The defect of this is that I do not *much* consider the Church in its connection with the State, though partially I do; but it gave me the idea of a modification which I think may do: 'The State viewed in its connection with the Church.'

"I entirely concur with your view regarding the necessity of care, and of not grudging labour in a matter so important and so responsible as an endeavour to raise one of the most momentous controversies which has ever agitated human opinion.

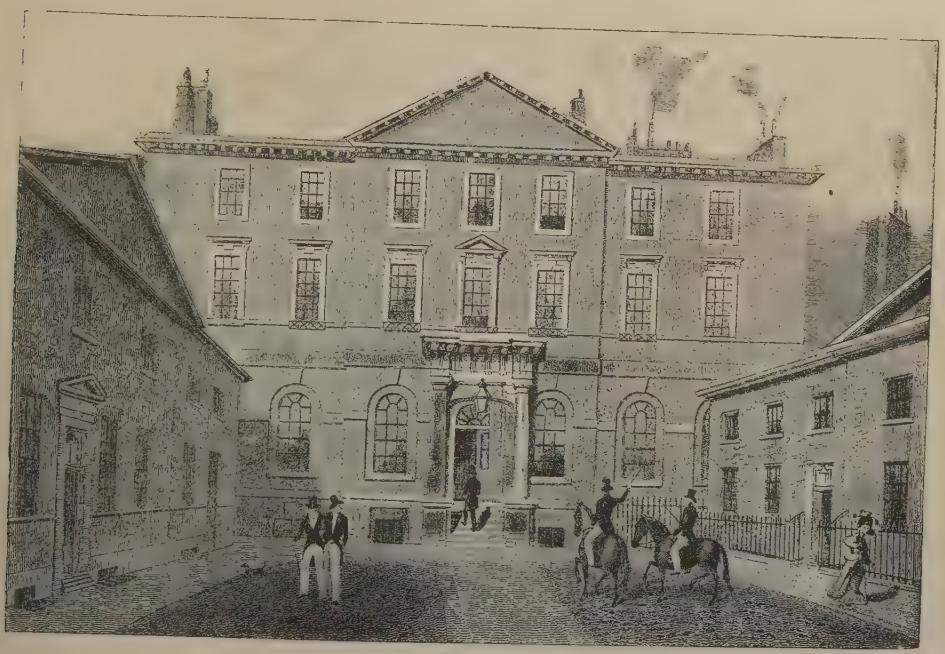
"Sincerely yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

* Hope was a candid critic, "using the pencil," as he said, "very unscrupulously."

Parliament was prorogued on the 10th of August, 1838, and Mr. Gladstone lost no time in starting for the Continent. But he suffered in the crossing; for on August 17th he wrote to Mr. Murray, his publisher, "a line from Rotterdam to say that sea-sickness prevented my correcting the proofs on the passage."

The book appeared in December, and was received with a loud chorus of praise which at first drowned the notes of disapproval. "It is the book of the time, a great event," wrote Bunsen, who was so impressed



THE ALBANY, FROM PICCADILLY, ABOUT 1838.

*(From a Drawing by T. H. Shepherd.)*

and enraptured that he recorded the hour of night at which the second edition came out, and himself sat up till after midnight and continued next morning until he had read the whole. "Almost every sheet," said the good baron with pride, "bears my marginal glosses, destined for the Prince, to whom I have sent the book with all despatch. Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power, and he has heard higher tones than anyone else in this island."

**How the Book was Received.**

Mr. Gladstone's book, as we have said, is ecclesiastical rather than theological. Its leading characteristics will be most clearly brought out if we institute a brief comparison and contrast with the earlier work of Coleridge "On the Constitution of the Church and State." The influence of this book upon Mr. Gladstone's mind was noticed, as has been pointed out

previously, by his most intimate friend, James Hope.* In the opening chapter, in which Mr. Gladstone reviews and summarises the authors who preceded him, Coleridge receives the largest meed of praise:—

"It does not appear that our literature is well supplied with works which would meet the necessity above described, and furnish men with sound principles (*axiomata summa*) upon the fundamental conditions of the union between the Church and the State. Bishop Warburton has written upon it with much acuteness and ability, but in the dry and technical manner of a man who lived in times when there was no strong pressure in one direction requiring to be warmly and feelingly met from another. Mr. Coleridge has dealt admirably with the subject in his 'Idea of Church and State;' but he does not carry out his conceptions into detail, nor apply them to practice sufficiently to meet the wants of general readers. Dr. Chalmers has handled some points connected with this inquiry in a manner the most felicitous, but, in other parts of his recently published lectures, he has laid down principles, we fear, not less seriously detrimental to our cause. The work of Dr. Paley on Moral and Political Philosophy is a store-house of anything rather than sound principles. Hooker looked at the question under influences derived from the general controversy with the Puritans, and rather with reference to the terms than to the grounds of the connection. None of these writers regarded the subject in the aspect most imperatively required by present circumstances: namely, that which shows that governments are, by 'dutiful necessity,' cognizant of religious truth and falsehood, and bound to the maintenance and propagation of the former."†

And later in the same chapter Mr. Gladstone develops with evident sympathy Coleridge's masterly sketch, adding certain explanations which, however, "in no way detract from the substantial truth of Mr. Coleridge's definition."

Coleridge's Theory.

Coleridge, it should be said, drew a sharp distinction between the Church of Christ and that National Church which is one of the three great estates of the realm, whose object is "to secure and improve that civilisation without which the nation could be neither permanent nor progressive," and which comprehends among its members "the learned of all denominations, the sages and professors of the law and jurisprudence, of medicine and physiology, of music, of military and civil architecture, of the physical sciences, with the mathematical as the common organ of the preceding," etc. etc. In short, Coleridge's State Church is a *Kultur-Kirche*, embracing in its operations all the liberal arts and sciences. Its proper end and function is "civilisation with freedom." A National Church can exist without Christianity. Indeed, in relation to such an establishment, "Christianity, or the Church of Christ, is a blessed accident."‡ What then is Mr. Gladstone's ideal of an Establishment? Coleridge called his clergymen clerks, and could have dispensed with them at a pinch. But in Mr. Gladstone's view the Church depends upon its clergy. Coleridge would not have his Establishment identified with "any particular scheme of theology." Such a theory is certainly tinged with Erastianism. But Mr. Gladstone was endeavouring not only to maintain the Church of England as a National and Established Church, but also to give it independence. It was in this desire for the spiritual autonomy of his Church that Mr. Gladstone later found common ground with the Nonconformist bodies. Coleridge's ideal is that the National

Mr. Gladstone's.

* See p. 123.

† "The State in its Relations with the Church," 2nd edition, p. 8.

‡ See Coleridge's "Church and State," chapters iii. and iv.

Church should comprise all differences, and ultimately disappear in the State. Mr. Gladstone's is rather that all differences should disappear, and that all members of the State should acquiesce in the *truth*, *i.e.* in the religious dogmas of the governors. It is probably the moral elevation, the suggestive idealism, of Coleridge's work which makes Mr. Gladstone regard the argument as "beautiful and profound." The differences of theory are easily discerned and defined; but the similarity of spirit, though manifest to the most superficial reader, is by its very nature incapable of the same summary statement.

The exclamations of joy with which most religiously minded people welcomed this novel departure of a young and rising politician soon began to pass away into the various notes of friendly censure and thinly disguised hostility. It only remained that the Papistical bogey should be raised. Then, in a moment, the mild criticism of Christian satisfaction developed into an acrid controversy of rival sects. The leading newspaper only required a month for the digestive process—the perusal which follows even less seldom than it precedes a review. Unfortunately for our author, the *Times* gave four notices. In the first, Mr. Gladstone's reasoning was ingenious, profound, eloquent, and at times unanswerable. This on December 19th. On the 26th the book could still be described as bold, dexterous, complete, trenchant, profound, and striking. But the balance was more than redressed by two articles which appeared on the 4th and 21st of January. The first of the two began: "In a former notice of Mr. W. E. Gladstone's work, 'On the State in its Relations with the Church,' we mentioned that there were certain points on which we should be constrained to differ from him. Such points appeared to us, in the first instance, to lie upon the surface, and to admit of an easy adjustment; but, on divesting them of the verbal garniture in which they are muffled up, and on subjecting them to that stricter analysis which their apparent harmony with divers dogmas of the Pusey school seemed to force upon us, we must own, with the deepest regret, though not retracting a particle of our homage to the general ability of Mr. Gladstone's volume, that these points are much more vital and important than we had formed any idea of." Then followed a violent attack upon "certain stupid and perfidious pamphlets entitled 'Tracts for the Times,'" and upon all those who, with *anti-Protestant* sentiments, persisted in retaining Protestant benefices. The article proceeded to indicate Mr. Gladstone's "Popish biases," and to show that he was "contaminated with these new-fangled Oxford bigotries."

Adverse Criticism.

Newman wrote to Frederic Rogers: "The *Times* is again at poor Gladstone; really I feel as if I could do anything for him. I have not read his book, but its consequences speak for it. Poor fellow! It is so noble a thing." Henry Crabb Robinson read the book to Wordsworth, whose simple soul failed to distinguish Gladstone's principles from those of Romanism, and would not accompany him "in his Anglo-Papistical pretensions." Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, thought half of it erroneous, but was delighted to have "a good protest against that wretched doctrine of Warburton's that the State has only to look after body and goods."

But there was one great man who regarded the publication in a purely

political light. Lord Houghton was at Peel's country seat, Drayton Manor, when the book appeared, and he tells us that "Peel turned over the pages of the book with somewhat scornful curiosity, and, after a hasty survey of its contents, threw the volume on the floor, exclaiming as he did so: 'That young man will ruin his fine political career if he persists in writing trash like this.'"*

Peel's Verdict.

Meanwhile the author, whose eyes had suffered from reading by candlelight, had been touring on the Continent by the advice of the doctors. He spent October in Sicily, saw the beginning of an eruption of Etna, and wrote a description which was appropriately incorporated in Murray's "Handbook for Sicily." The scene, he said, "amply repays the pains of our journey to Sicily, and obliterates from recollection the vermin and the mules." More interesting, perhaps, than the diary is a lecture upon this visit which Mr. Gladstone delivered, long afterwards, at Hawarden — on January 5th, 1863. The following extract gives a vivid impression of the wretched state of the island:—

In Sicily, 1838.

*Photo: Watmough Webster, Chester.*

LADY GLYNNE, MRS. GLADSTONE'S MOTHER (*p.* 40).

(*From a Painting by J. Slater at Hawarden Castle.*)

"The cholera had ravaged the country shortly before my visit, and the people were possessed with the feeling that the cholera had been introduced by the Government. I made this note on the subject at the time:—'The people are persuaded that the King procured the cholera to come among them, and that it was not sent by God.' They began to murder persons of the upper classes. The cholera ceased; they believed the King did this to check the revolutionary spirit, and to thin the people. They also believed the Cardinal Archbishop received the cholera in a pinch of snuff from one of the King's generals, and that the reason why the disease was given to him was that he had refused to have anything to do with the introduction of cholera into the island. That is a very ludicrous, but at the same time a very melancholy fact, for it is impossible to conceive anything more illustrative of the unhappy and radically bad system under which the people of Sicily lived at that period, than that such a belief should exist among the people of the island."

In December he arrived at Rome, having travelled part of the way with the widow and daughters of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne. But "the proposal," so Mrs. Gladstone wrote long afterwards, "did not take place till Rome." Sir Stephen Glynne, the last baronet, son of Sir Stephen Richard, was an old college friend; and Mr. Gladstone had paid him a visit at Hawarden Castle in 1835.

At Rome.

In Rome Mr. Gladstone passed many days in the company of his friend Henry Manning. They visited churches together, and spent a good deal

* Sir Wemyss Reid's Life of Lord Houghton, vol. i., p. 316.

of time in the study of Christian art. But another and greater personage than Manning was at Rome that winter. Macaulay writes in his Journal: "On Christmas Eve I found Gladstone in the throng; and I accosted him, as we had met, though we had never been introduced to each other. He received my advances with very great *empressement* indeed, and we had a good deal of pleasant talk." And again, at the end of February, in a letter to Napier: "By the bye, I met Gladstone at Rome. We talked and walked together in St. Peter's during the best part of an afternoon. He is both a clever and an amiable man."

Meeting Macaulay.

In the first week of February, 1839, Macaulay returned to London; and the story of the famous review can be told by extracts from his Diary and letters.

"Friday, February 8.- I bought Gladstone's book: a capital Shrovetide cock to throw at. Almost too good a mark."

"February 13.—I read, while walking, a good deal of Gladstone's book. The Lord hath delivered him into our hand. I think I see my way to a popular, and at the same time gentlemanlike, critique. . . . Home, and thought about Gladstone. In two or three days I shall have the whole in my head, and then my pen will go like fire."

"3, Clarges Street, February 26, 1839.

"DEAR NAPIER,—I can now promise you an article in a week, or ten days at furthest. Of its length I cannot speak with certainty. I should think it would fill about forty pages; but I find the subject grow on me. I think that I shall dispose completely of Gladstone's theory. I wish that I could see my way clearly to a good counter theory; but I catch only glimpses here and there of what I take to be truth."

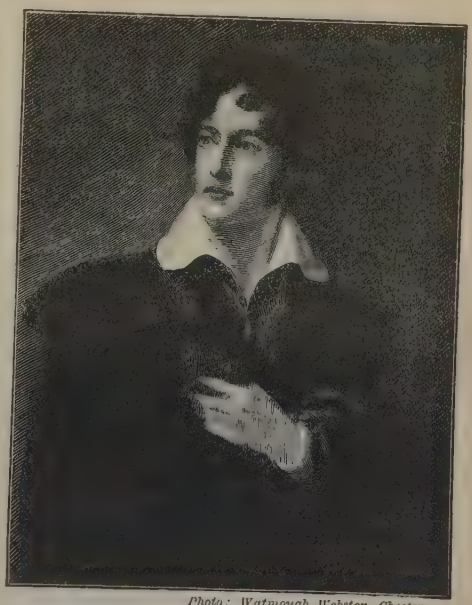


*Photo: Watmough Webster, Chester.*

SIR STEPHEN R. GLYNNE, MRS. GLADSTONE'S FATHER.

*(From a Painting by J. Slater at Hawarden Castle.)*

Mr. Gladstone's book and Macaulay's review are the best possible illustration of the advantage which the destroyer has compared with the builder in the realm of thought. On March 20th, 1839, Macaulay writes to his sister Hannah:—

"I have had my proofs from Napier. He magnifies the article prodigiously. In a letter to Empson he calls it exquisite and admirable, and to me he writes that it is the finest piece of logic that ever was printed. I do not think it so; but I do think that I have disposed of all Gladstone's theories unanswerably; and there is not a line of the paper which even so strict a judge as Sir Robert Inglis, or my Uncle Babington, could quarrel at as at all indecorous."

At the beginning of April Mr. Gladstone expressed his acknowledgments:—

"I have been favoured with a copy of the forthcoming number of the *Edinburgh*

*Review;* and I perhaps too much presume upon the bare acquaintance with you, of which alone I can boast, in thus unceremoniously assuming you to be the author of the article entitled 'Church and State,' and in offering you my very warm and cordial thanks for the manner in which you have treated both the work and the author on whom you deigned to bestow your attention. In whatever you write you can hardly hope for the privilege of most anonymous productions, a real concealment; but, if it had been possible not to recognise you, I should have questioned your authorship in this particular case, because the candour and singlemindedness which it exhibits are, in one who has long been connected in the most distinguished manner with political party, so rare as to be almost incredible. . . . In these lacerating times one clings to everything of personal kindness in the past, to husband it for the future; and, if you will allow me, I shall earnestly desire to carry with me such a recollection of your mode of dealing with a subject upon which the attainment of truth, we shall agree, so materially depends upon the temper in which the search for it is instituted and conducted."

**A Letter to Macaulay, 1839.**

Macaulay's reply is delightful:—

"I have very seldom," he writes in reply to Mr. Gladstone, "been more gratified than by the very kind note which I have just received from you. Your book itself, and everything that I heard about you (though almost all my information came—to the honour, I must say, of our troubled times—from people very strongly opposed to you in politics), led me to regard you with respect and goodwill, and I am truly glad that I have succeeded in marking those feelings. I was half afraid, when I read myself over again in print, that the button, as is too common in controversial fencing even between friends, had once or twice come off the foil." *

The review was, practically speaking, final. Mr. Gladstone never forgot it; and he admitted afterwards that if his book lived it would be in the pages of Macaulay. Few of the great writer's sentences have been more often quoted than that classical description of Mr. Gladstone as "the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories, who follow, reluctantly and mutinously, a leader whose experience and eloquence are indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor."

Long afterwards, in his review of Macaulay's Life and Letters—one of his happiest essays in literature—Mr. Gladstone observed of his critic that the "analysis was always rough, hasty and sweeping, and his perceptions robust." In this instance Macaulay did most execution by making clear the obscurer parts of Mr. Gladstone's argument. "There is no want of light," he said, "but a great want of what Bacon would have called dry light. Whatever Mr. Gladstone sees is refracted and distorted by a false medium of passions and prejudices. His style bears a remarkable analogy to his mode of thinking, and, indeed, exercises great influence on his mode of thinking. His rhetoric, though often good of its kind, darkens and perplexes the logic which it should illustrate. Half his acuteness and diligence, with a barren imagination and a scanty vocabulary, would have saved him from almost all his mistakes. He has one gift most dangerous to a speculator: a vast command of a kind of language, grave and majestic, but of vague and uncertain import—of a kind of language which affects us much in the same way in which the lofty diction of the Chorus of Clouds affected the simple-hearted Athenian."

**Macaulay on Gladstone.**

* Sir George Trevelyan's Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, pp. 373-376. How much Mr. Gladstone's letter of thanks pleased Macaulay is indicated, says Sir George Trevelyan, by the fact of his having kept it unburned—"a compliment which, except in this single instance, he never paid to any of his correspondents."

The truth is that Mr. Gladstone's theories, as soon as they became legible, appeared to the ordinary man of either party impracticable or unreasonable; and Bunsen's fond idea, that the book had given "a standing-place whereon to form a Church party in the House of Commons," was completely dispelled by the criticism of the *Edinburgh Review*. No one was more ready to acknowledge this than Mr. Gladstone himself. "Scarcely," he confessed in his interesting and closely argued "Chapter of Autobiography," "had my work issued from the press, when I became aware that there was no party, no section of a party, no individual person probably in the House of Commons, who was prepared to act upon it. I found myself the last on the sinking ship. Exclusive support to the Established religion of the country, with a limited and local exception for Scotland under the Treaty of Union with that country, had been up to that time the actual rule of our policy; the instances to the contrary being of equivocal construction, and of infinitesimal amount. But the attempt to give this rule a vitality, other than that of sufferance, was an anachronism in time and in place. When I bid it live, it was just about to die. It was really a quickened and not a deadened conscience in the country which insisted on enlarging the circle of State support, even while it tended to restrain the range of political interference in religion. The condition of our poor, of our criminals, of our military and naval services, and the backward state of popular education, forced on us a group of questions, before the moral pressure of which the old rules properly gave way."

Gladstone on Himself.

Indeed, from a political point of view, Peel's annoyance was very soon justified. In the following June, when the Whig Ministry proposed to establish a Central Board of Education which was to be a Committee of the Privy Council, and to put under its control an increased Education grant, the book was dragged into the discussion by O'Connell,* Morpeth, and Buller. O'Connell produced some statistics about the wealth of the Established Church; and this gave Mr. Gladstone his opening. He quoted a saying of Canning that "he had a great aversion to hear of a fact in a debate, but that which he distrusted most was a figure," and, after traversing O'Connell's statements as to the numbers of Dissenters and the wealth of the Established Church, added drily: "It would

Elementary Education, 1839.

* Mr. Gladstone in after years gave an amusing reminiscence of O'Connell in connection with a Select Committee (upon a legal question) which was appointed in 1834. "There was an important witness, of the name, I think, of Slingsby, who was disabled by age from travelling. A sub-committee was appointed to go down some fifty miles and examine him. It consisted of O'Connell, Sir George Sinclair, and myself. O'Connell, I think, asked me whether I would mind going down on Sunday after his (early) Mass, but I declined. We started on Monday at 5 a.m., in the summer, and the affair occupied some fourteen hours, which I spent with him in an open carriage and four. I rather think that on that day he brought with him a theological work to prove to me that all baptised persons were, in a certain sense, in the Church. I also recollect that in 1839, shortly after I had published a book called 'The State in its Relations with the Church,' he said to me in the House of Commons, behind the Speaker's chair, 'I claim the half of you.' It was very kind on his part to enter thus freely into conversation with a young man opposed to him in politics, and hotly prejudiced against him."

appear that the honourable and learned member, in his attempt to lead the House to useful knowledge by means of statistics, has assumed to himself the privilege of more than doubling the amount of property in the possession of the Church."

Macaulay's essay had already begun to exercise its destructive effects; for when Mr. Gladstone asserted that the State could have a conscience, some irreverent individuals began to laugh. But Mr. Gladstone's friends must have felt a little uneasy when they heard words like these:—

"It is constantly urged that it is the duty of the State to give the people education; but look at the consequences of this principle. If it is the duty of the State to give education to the people, do not all the arguments that go to show this tend equally to show that it is the duty of the State to provide them with religion? If it is the duty of the State to endow all the schools, is it not the duty of the State to endow all the chapels?"

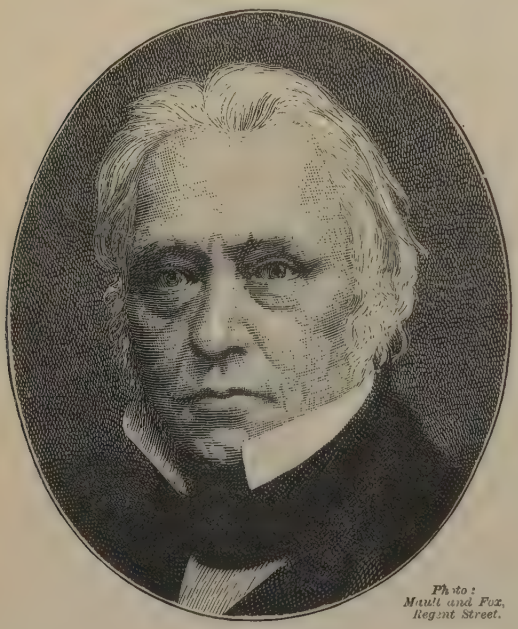


Photo: Mault and Fox, Regent Street.

LORD MACAULAY.

However, there was no doubt as yet in Mr. Gladstone's mind as to the desirability of restricting State doles to Anglican schools; and this sectarian bigotry could only be maintained by an appeal to Christian bigotry:—

"How was the education of the Jewish people, who considered the New Testament to be an imposture, to be sedulously connected with a due regard to the Holy Scriptures? . . . Were the Jewish children to be forced to read the New Testament? . . . He wished to see no child forced to read, but he protested against paying from the money of the State a set of men whose business would be to teach erroneous doctrines to the children."

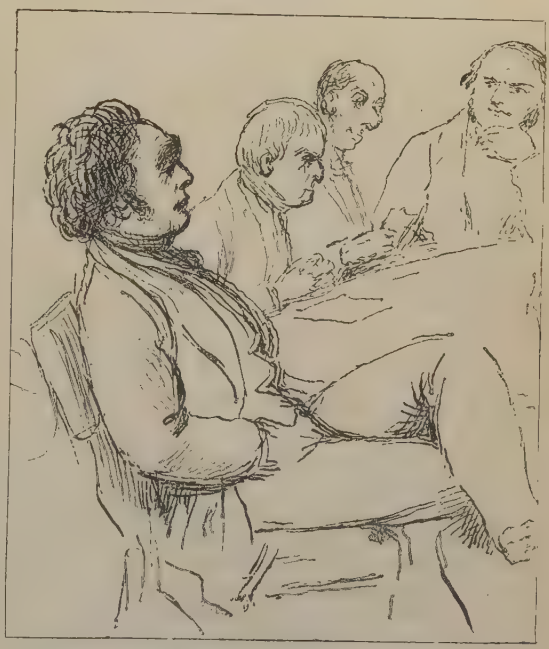
Mr. Gladstone was at this time quite capable of retorting a taunt. "What," he asked rhetorically in the course of the debate on the Government's proposal, "is the predicament of the country? To what are they bringing the country?" "At least, not to bigotry and ignorance," interjected Lord John Russell. "The noble lord," Mr. Gladstone replied, "would be more accurate if he said to latitudinarianism and atheism."

On the whole, however, Mr. Gladstone's opponents had the best of it. Spring Rice adduced the fact that Mr. Gladstone had been Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and had thereby sanctioned State grants to Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and Jews: "What becomes of the State conscience now," he asked triumphantly, "the State conscience bound only to disseminate truth? The honourable gentleman says truth is

single. Which, then, of these various forms is the truth? All cannot be the truth, and yet you support all." From this useful object lesson in the value or necessity of religious tolerance we must go back a little to Colonial affairs.

It might be thought that Mr. Gladstone displayed a liberal spirit in opposing the motion of Henry Labouchere (afterwards Lord Taunton) on April 9th, 1839, for leave to bring in a Bill suspending the Constitution of Jamaica. But the Jamaica Assembly had absolutely no claims to consideration. The population of Jamaica was at this time about 350,000, of whom only 5,000 were white. But the constituency which elected the Assembly numbered, according to Sir Lionel Smith, only 1,500 or 1,600 persons! This precious oligarchy had been endeavouring ever since the abolition of slavery to perpetuate for the unfortunate "apprentices" in workhouses and gaols the cruel punishments which had been previously inflicted by the slaveowners themselves.* On May 6th Mr. Gladstone spoke in the adjourned debate. He contended that the sentiments of the Assembly had been misinterpreted, that they had not threatened to abdicate their functions unless the Prison Act was repealed. As to the present franchise law, "the people get hold of the franchise not too slowly but too rapidly." But he was not a pessimist in this respect, and did not anticipate any collision between the proprietors and the negro electorate. "So far as experience already went, the admission of the Colonial

**Suspension of the Jamaica Constitution, 1839.**



A PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, SHOWING MR. GLADSTONE ON EXTREME RIGHT.

(*From a Drawing by Richard Doyle.*)

* One cannot help admiring, however, the impudence of the protest which the Assembly launched against the Apprenticeship Amendment Bill:—"This House does not dread a comparison with the Commons of England in the success of their legislation. Our laws have not been defied, as by the Irish opponents of tithes; murders are not committed in our island by companies of armed men in open day; nor do bands prowl about at night, setting fire to barns and ricks of corn; nor do our labourers and artisans combine, as of late in Dublin and Glasgow, to raise wages even by maiming and murder. . . . We have no corn-laws to add to the wealth of the rich, nor poor-laws to imprison under pretence of maintaining the poor."

population to the enjoyment of civil rights and the political franchise had tended not to produce dissension but to amalgamate them together." He appealed to the House not to pass a Bill which would "shake the confidence of our Colonial fellow-subjects throughout the whole circle of our Colonial possessions."*

A division took place on the same night, and the Government's majority fell to five. Lord Melbourne resigned. Lord Brougham postponed his Beer Bill with the regretful aside that he regarded it to "be of more importance as regards the public morals than the resignation of any Ministry." How the Queen sent for the Duke of Wellington, and then by his advice for Sir Robert Peel: how on the refusal of the Queen to dispense with the services of the great Whig ladies around her, Sir Robert Peel abandoned the attempt to form an Administration and allowed his opponents to skulk back into office "behind the petticoats of the ladies-in-waiting,"† does not directly concern the reader of this narrative. Sir Robert Peel's dignified speech was felt entirely to have justified his conduct. He had saved himself from another almost hopeless effort to govern with a minority of the House of Commons, and to govern under difficulties which a stronger Government would have found it hard to face. There was insurrection in the provinces. Lord John Russell had just written a letter inviting respectable people to form themselves into armed societies for the purpose of resisting outrage. Ireland would have been the main difficulty; but there were also Canada, India, and Jamaica. "Her Majesty's Ministers retired on the question of Jamaica, being in a majority of five; I should have had to undertake the settlement of the Jamaica question, being in a minority of five." Peel therefore might well have rejoiced, as a party leader, that the conditions under which he would have accepted office were not fulfilled. On the next occasion the Prince Consort succeeded in rescuing the Queen from an untenable position, by suggesting that the obnoxious ladies might retire of their own accord; and thus her Majesty was able in 1841 to afford Peel the "demonstration" (for which he asked vainly in 1839) that he possessed her "entire confidence." For the time, however, Lord Melbourne returned to office, though not to power; and a second Jamaica Bill was introduced and passed which Mr. Gladstone liked no better than the first.

**Lord Melbourne's Resignation, 1839.**

Mr. Gladstone had been engaged since the winter, and on the 25th of July, 1839, a double marriage was celebrated at Hawarden Church, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Lyttelton being the bridegrooms, Miss Catherine Glynne and her younger sister, Mary, the brides. It was at first feared that the date would have to be postponed on account of a Chartist attack on Hagley, Lord Lyttelton's Worcestershire seat. But this turned out to be unnecessary, and the day previously fixed was adhered to.

**Mr. Gladstone's Marriage, 1839.**

The double wedding was attended with great rejoicings in the village and neighbourhood of Hawarden. The houses were decorated with flags and wreathed with laurel. The bridal procession and the ceremony have been admirably described by Mr. Robbins:—

"The marriage procession from Hawarden Castle to the church was long and varied:

* Hansard, May 6th, 1839. † Molesworth's phrase.

Odd Fellows and members of temperance societies with 'tradesmen in large numbers' preceded the carriage of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, the chariot of Lord Delamere, and the barouche of Lord Wenlock. In Lady Glynne's chaise rode four of the bridesmaids, including Mr. Gladstone's sister; then came Sir Stephen Glynne with his sisters, the two brides; Lord Lyttelton followed with his groomsman; Mr. Gladstone rode next with his father, while his eldest brother, Thomas, came later with Doyle; and the second brother, Robertson, with his wife, was also in the procession. At the crowded church, which was reached amid loud plaudits from the multitude outside, and the path to which was bestrewn with flowers, the wedding party was received with an anthem, rendered by a choir of children; and Sir Stephen Glynne led his elder sister to the altar rails, his brother, Henry, attending the younger. The ceremony was performed by Neville Grenville, Dean of Windsor, and uncle of the brides—who, it may be recorded, wore peach-white satin dresses, trimmed with Brussels flounces, and orange blossom wreaths having a diamond in the centre; while the bridesmaids were attired in mulled muslin dresses, with trimmings of blonde and peach colour, head-wreaths similar to the brides', and crape lace bonnets."

It is unnecessary to follow the local newspapers in their descriptions. "The cheering populace," "the weeping poor," the *éclat*, the *coup d'œil*, and many other purple patches which may be found in the *Chester Gazette*, the *Chester Courant*, and the *Chester Chronicle* can hardly be said to differentiate this from other fashionable marriages.

Francis Doyle wrote some verses which contain a charge to Mr. Gladstone's bride, beautiful in its conception but still more beautiful in its fulfilment:—

"High hopes are thine, oh! Eldest Flower,
Great duties to be greatly done;
To soothe, in many a toil-worn hour,
The noble heart which thou hast won.

"Covet not then the rest of those
Who sleep through life unknown to fame;
Fate grants not passionless repose
To her who weds a glorious name.

"He presses on through calm and storm
Unshaken, let what will betide;
*Thou* hast an office to perform—
To be his answering spirit bride.

"The path appointed for his feet,
Through desert wilds, and rocks may go,
Where the eye looks in vain to greet
The gales that from the waters blow.

"Be thou a breezy balm to him,
A fountain singing at his side;
A star whose light is never dim;
A pillar, to uphold and guide."

Miss Catherine Glynne was the eldest daughter of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, eighth baronet of that name. Her ancestry was sufficiently distinguished; for Lady Glynne was granddaughter to the Right Hon. G. Grenville and niece to his son, Lord Grenville, and cousin to Pitt, whose father, Lord Chatham, had married Hester Grenville.* Mr. Gladstone just redressed the balance by becoming in his own person four times Prime Minister. On June 3rd of the following year William Henry Gladstone,

* Lady Glynne was also niece to Temple (Lord Buckingham), who was asked two or three times to form a Ministry, but failed, and was made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

afterwards member for Whitby, was born. Hope and Manning were his godfathers.

After their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone lived in London in Sir John Gladstone's house, 6, Carlton Gardens; and this gave facilities for Mr. Gladstone's continued intimacy with Sidney Herbert, who lived next door. But besides 6, Carlton Gardens, they had 13, Carlton House Terrace. Mr. Gladstone, however, sold the latter to Lord Grey, and bought No. 11, Carlton House Terrace in 1856, selling this in turn in 1876. It is hardly necessary to add that long periods of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone's

NORTH-WEST ANGLE OF HAWARDEN CASTLE.

life were spent in the official residence in Downing Street. In the country they divided their time for the next twelve or fifteen years between Hawarden, Fasque, and Hagley—Fasque most of all during Sir John Gladstone's lifetime.

**An Examiner at Eton, 1840.**

The last two sessions of the Whig Government deserve but little notice. Mr. Gladstone was working hard for the Diocesan Boards of Education. In the spring of 1840, when he examined at Eton for the Newcastle scholarship, he won golden opinions from the boys, one of whom wrote in after years:—

"I wish you to understand that Mr. Gladstone appeared not to me only, but to others, as a gentleman wholly unlike other examiners or school people. It was not as a *politician* that we admired him, but as a refined Churchman, deep also in political

philosophy (so we conjectured from his quoting Burke on the Continual State retaining its identity though made up of passing individuals), deep, also, in lofty poetry, as we guessed from his giving us, as a theme for original Latin verse, 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy,' etc. When he spoke to us in 'Pop' as an honorary member, we were charmed and affected emotionally: his voice was low and sweet, his manner was that of an elder cousin; he seemed to treat us with unaffected respect; and to be treated with respect by a man is the greatest delight for a boy."*

Mr. Gladstone's educational zeal at this time was still limited to movements proceeding from within his Church. He hated, and indeed to the end of his life disliked, concurrent endowment. But, as the late Sir Thomas Acland put it in a letter to the present writer: "He was willing to have grants given to the British and Foreign Society, because (in his way of refinement) it was not *anti-Church*, but *less than Church only;* but he would not consent to subsidise any distinct denomination—*e.g.* Wesleyan or Roman Catholic."

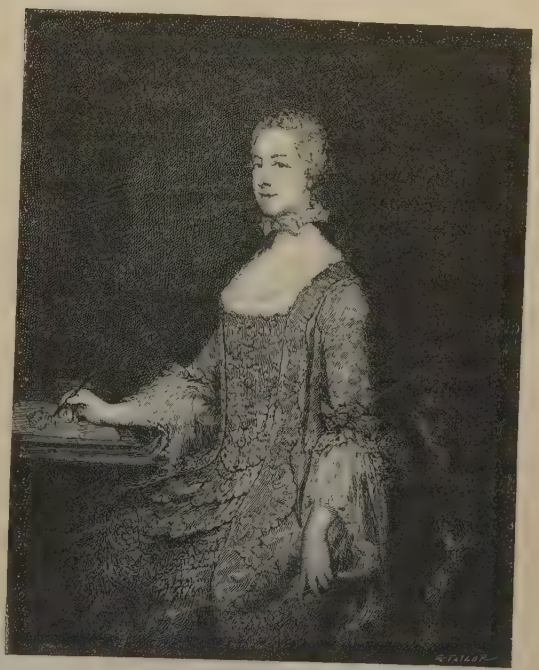


*Photo: Watmough Webster, Chester.*

CATHERINE GRENVILLE, MRS. GLADSTONE'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER.

*(From a Painting at Hawarden Castle.)*

On the 8th of April, 1840, Mr. Gladstone entered the lists with Macaulay. It was in a debate on the China question, in which the Opposition maintained that the interruption of friendly relations between the two countries was due to the shortsightedness of the Ministerial policy. Macaulay had endeavoured to evade the odium, which the Government deserved for its countenance of the illicit traffic in opium, by various accusations against the Chinese. The Chinese of Macao had, it was alleged, poisoned the wells used by the British residents. Mr. Gladstone incautiously admitted the accusation, and still more unwisely tried to defend the proceeding. "The Chinese had no means of expelling them by an armament; they could only expel them by refusing a supply of provisions; and, of course, they poisoned the wells." Mr. Gladstone immediately saw his mistake, for the Whigs began to cheer. "I am ready to meet those cheers; I understand what they mean. I may do the Chinese injustice by saying they poisoned the wells. All I mean to say is that it has been alleged that they had poisoned their wells. The Chinese," he added, resuming his defence, "had

**The China Question.**

* Mr. G. W. E. Russell's Life of Gladstone, p. 62.

given you full notice, and wished to drive you from their coast. They had a right to drive you from their coast if you persisted in carrying on this infamous and atrocious traffic. . . . You allowed your agent to aid and abet those who were concerned in carrying on that trade; and I do not know how it can be urged as a crime against the Chinese that they refused provisions to those who refused obedience to their laws whilst residing within their territories."

Perhaps the most effective part of Macaulay's speech had been that in which he had spoken of the Union Jack which had been raised over a British factory in Canton as a flag upon which no Englishman could look "even in that far extremity of the world without remembering the glories and confiding in the power of his country." Mr. Gladstone's retort is well worthy of quotation. It was one of the few occasions in which he got the better of Macaulay. "We all know," he exclaimed, "the animating effects which have been produced by the flag in the minds of British subjects on many a critical occasion, in many a hard-fought field. But, how comes it to pass that the sight of that flag always raises the spirit of Englishmen? It is because it has always been associated with the cause of justice, with the protection of the oppressed, with respect for national rights, with honourable commercial enterprise; but now, under the auspices of the noble lord,* that flag is hoisted for the purpose of protecting an infamous contraband traffic; and if it were never to be hoisted except as it is now hoisted on the coast of China, we should recoil from its sight with horror, and should never again feel our hearts thrill, as they now do, with emotion, when it floats proudly and magnificently in the breeze."

**A Retort upon Macaulay.**

It was in 1840 that Mr. Gladstone became a member of Grillion's Club, that famous resort of the leaders of both political parties, whose importance may be inferred from the saying that "the English Constitution is a democracy tempered by Grillion's." The club originated in Christ Church, Oxford, and was founded by the father of Mr. Gladstone's lifelong friend Sir Thomas Acland, who also presented to the club many valuable portraits of its early members, and whose statue still stands on the table.

**Grillion's Club.**

On July 9th, 1840, Mr. Gladstone joined a Select Committee to consider the question of the colonisation of New Zealand. His interest in Colonial matters had been great ever since his short official career in 1835. As member of a Committee on Colonial lands in 1836, he had been thrown into connection with that remarkable man, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who, after a term of imprisonment inflicted for the abduction of a lady of property, had, in the words of Mr. A. F. Robbins, "turned his attention to Colonial affairs with striking results." † In April, 1841, Mr. Gladstone was appointed treasurer of the Colonial Bishopric fund. His Eton friend, George Selwyn, had just been appointed first bishop of New Zealand—a promotion which elicited from Sydney Smith the remark that it would make a revolution in New Zealand dinners. "*Tête d'Evêque* will be the most *recherché* dish, and

**Colonial Matters.**

* Palmerston, at that time Foreign Secretary. Palmerston, in his reply, took care to rub in Mr. Gladstone's unfortunate remark about the poisoning of the wells.

† "Early Public Life of Gladstone," p. 380.

your man will add, 'And there is *cold clergyman* on the side-table!'" The story that Mr. Gladstone about this time made a speculative experiment in New South Wales seems to have no foundation in fact.

In 1840 Mr. Gladstone took part in the establishment of the society for the extinction of the slave trade in Africa, and was present at the meeting of June 1st, in Exeter Hall, over which the Prince Consort presided. His growing hatred of slavery was shown in the debate upon the sugar duties which settled the fate of the Whig Ministry in the midsummer of 1841. The Whigs, in order to draw the attention of the country, before the dissolution of Parliament, to their adoption of the policy of cheapening articles of common consumption, proposed to reduce the duty on foreign sugar. Strangely enough, this proposal united the West Indian proprietors and the abolitionists. But Mr. Gladstone spoke from the point of view of the latter. "Is it not," he said, "enough for us to know that at this moment the slave trade is a monster which is consuming day by day, and every day, the lives of a thousand of our fellow-creatures: that while war, pestilence, and famine slay their thousands, the slave trade, from year to year, with unceasing operation, slays its tens of thousands?" He then taunted Macaulay with the contrast between the traditions of his family and the policy of the Cabinet of which he was a member. "I can only speak from tradition of the struggle for the abolition of slavery, but, if I have not been misinformed, there was engaged in it a man who was the unseen ally of Mr. Wilberforce, and the pillar of his strength; a man of profound benevolence, of acute understanding, of indefatigable industry, and of that self-denying temper which is content to work in secret, and to seek for its reward beyond the grave."

Growing Hatred of Slavery.

This speech, taken with his utterances on China in the previous year, might perhaps give an exaggerated impression of Mr. Gladstone's political growth. It was a party speech on the eve of the dissolution. In domestic politics Mr. Gladstone was still a High Tory and a close political associate of Sir Robert Inglis. At the beginning of the session of 1841 we find him opposing Divett's Jews' Declarations Bill, which would have admitted Jews to offices in municipal corporations on the same terms as "Quakers, Moravians, and Separatists." The speech is an interesting one. "Christianity," he said, "is part and parcel of the law of England." Jews were therefore disqualified for legislative office. The question before the House was "whether they would consent to destroy the distinctive Christianity of the Constitution." It had been said, If Catholics and Dissenters, why not Jews? But the Roman Catholics and the Dissenters were united with them "by a common bond of a belief in the same redemption." Moreover, Roman Catholics formed the bulk of the Irish population, "and had therefore a right to expect to be represented in the legislature of the country." But besides that, "they were naturally embittered by the recollection of former grievances; for the Roman Catholics smarted under the remembrances of centuries of oppression. He did not shrink from that expression, and the only remark he would add was that they were oppressed partly as Roman Catholics, partly as Irishmen, partly on the score of their religion, and partly as belonging to a country which had been unjustly and monstrously used."

But Still a Tory (1841).

The Bill was passed by an immense majority (Ayes 108, Noes 31), including a large proportion of moderate Conservatives, but was thrown out by the House of Lords. The Lords, indeed, had been persistently harassing the Whig Government, throwing out every measure of reform which, to borrow the words of Sir George Trevelyan, "had not behind it an irresistible mass of excited public opinion." The Whigs meant well, but little could they do. Many Bills and few Acts; Royal Commissions without results: and all because, when the first burst of Reform enthusiasm was over, they tamely submitted to the insults of a hereditary chamber. They allowed the Tories to begin the practice of employing the House of Lords as a party weapon. "I am quite certain," wrote Macaulay from India, "that in a few years the House of Lords must go after Old Sarum and Gatton." But the Whig Government had been too timid to follow Macaulay, and the contagion of its miserable example has spread through succeeding Ministries. Like them it was punished twice—first by the House of Lords and secondly by the constituencies. On May 19th the Whigs were beaten on the sugar duties. But they refused to resign; tried to struggle on with a proposal for abolishing the sliding scale in favour of a fixed duty on wheat; and with this wretched cry went at last, reluctantly and despondently, to an ungrateful country. Peel had carried a vote of want of confidence by a majority of one on June 4th, 1841, and a fortnight later Parliament was dissolved.

F. W. HIRST.

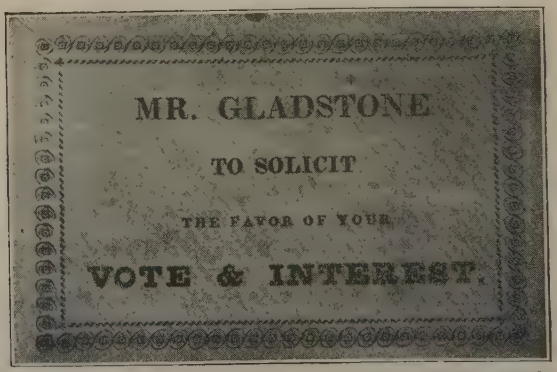



*Photo: W. McLeod, Newark.*

MR. GLADSTONE'S CANVASSING CARD AT NEWARK.

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# CHAPTER V.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS A THEOLOGIAN.

Dr. Döllinger on Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Gladstone on Dr. Döllinger—The Range of his Theological Reading—His Favourite Patristic Writers—His Memory—Origin of a Famous Hymn—His Power of Concentration—His Attitude towards the Old Testament—The Controversy with Mr. Huxley—Authorship of the Pentateuch—Fluidity of the Higher Criticism—Gradual Growth of Religious Views—Disestablishment of the Irish Church—The Maynooth Grant—Mr. Gladstone's Theory of the Church—The Nonconformist View of a Church—The Eastern Churches—Apostolical Succession and the Doctrine of Chances—Objections Repelled—Desire for the Reunion of Christendom—Vaticanism—Validity of Anglican Orders—Concessions in Favour of Nonconformity—Genuine Undenominationalism—Spurious Undenominationalism—Hatred of Erastianism—The Butler Studies—Mr. Gladstone's Humility—Views on Natural Immortality—Eternal Punishment—The Future Life—Where Knowledge Ends—Mr. Gladstone's Piety—A Sympathetic Thinker.

IN the spring of 1870, Mr. Delane, with whom I had then a literary connection, suggested that I should visit Oberammergau and send a description to the *Times* of the first representation of the famous decennial Passion Play, of which very little was then known in England. Happening to mention this to Mr. Gladstone, he advised me to go by way of Munich and make the acquaintance of Dr. von Döllinger, to whom he kindly offered me an introduction. That was the beginning of a friendship which lasted till the death of the great German theologian, and which I cherish as one of the greatest privileges of my life. My visits to Munich after that were frequent, for Dr. Döllinger, with the kindness that distinguished him, offered to direct my studies on certain subjects of ecclesiastical and theological interest, which I was delighted to pursue under such favourable auspices. He placed a small room next his own at my disposal in his library, and there I used to work daily, till Dr. Döllinger's afternoon walk, which generally lasted about three hours. He was a delightful companion, overflowing with information and anecdotes on all subjects, ancient and modern. During one of those charming walks he suddenly stopped, as he was wont to do when something specially interesting occurred to him, and asked me whom I considered our chief English theologians. I gave him several names. "You have omitted," said he, "a name that I should place in the front rank of your theologians." "Who is that?" I asked. "Mr. Gladstone," was the answer. "I have known him for nearly thirty years, and my opinion is that, taking him all round, you have not a superior theologian in England. You may have some theologians more learned than he in separate departments of theology; but I doubt whether you have one who combines so many of the attributes of a sound theologian: wide and accurate knowledge of dogmatic theology, ecclesiastical history, canon law, philosophy, and, superadded to all, an unusual range of general knowledge which enables him to illustrate whatever theme he is discussing. On my first and only visit to England in the year 1850, I lost

**Dr. Döllinger on Mr. Gladstone.**

no time in calling on Mr. Gladstone, whom I had known before. I found him in his library busy on his treatise on the Royal Supremacy, with volumes on divinity and canon law lying open about him. Yes, my friend, you have not a greater theologian in England than Mr. Gladstone."

In one of the most recent of his essays Mr. Gladstone refers to a visit which he paid to Dr. Döllinger in 1845. "He gave me," he says, "his time and thought with a liberality that excited my astonishment, and I derived from him much that was valuable in explanation and instruction; nor did he scorn my young and immature friendship." * Of this visit Mr. Gladstone told me much the day he recommended me to make Döllinger's acquaintance. They discussed the main points of difference between the Anglican and Roman Churches, and Mr. Gladstone was greatly struck with Döllinger's explanation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which he repeated to me. I wrote it down, and gave it some time afterwards to a devout Evangelical friend, who asked me to explain what I meant by the doctrine of the Real Presence. "If that is what it means," he said, "I have been a believer in the doctrine all my life without knowing it."

**Mr. Gladstone on Dr. Döllinger.**

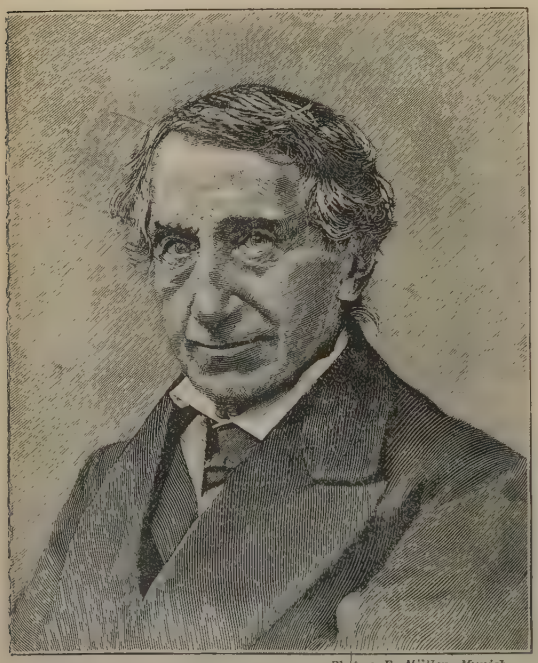


*Photo: F. Müller, Munich.*

DR. DÖLLINGER.

I asked Dr. Döllinger if Mr. Gladstone's recollection of this conversation was accurate, especially in regard to transubstantiation. "Quite accurate," he replied; adding, with humorous pathos, "he kept me up till two o'clock in the morning. But it was all very interesting." It was Döllinger's habit to be in bed by ten o'clock and up by five.

Dr. Döllinger was not only a singularly competent authority on the qualifications of a theologian; he was, moreover, a man who measured his words and delivered his judgments on men and things with judicial impartiality. I have read everything that Mr. Gladstone published with his signature, and a good deal that he published anonymously, and I believe that posterity will ratify Dr. Döllinger's judgment upon him as a theologian. There is nothing of the amateur in any of his theological

* "Later Gleanings," p. 291.

or semi-theological and ecclesiastical essays. But they touch upon or discuss various aspects and tenets of theology in its diverse ramifications with an easy familiarity which is a better test than any formal treatise. The range of reading which these essays cover is truly marvellous. He seems equally at home in Patristic, Mediæval, and Reformation theology; in ecclesiastical history; in canon law; in the philosophy of Christianity; and even in the schoolmen. I remember his recommending me, when I was a young curate, to study St. Thomas Aquinas. He thought it a great pity, as did also De Quincey,* that the English clergy had apparently, as a body, given up the study of casuistry, an accurate knowledge of which was so marked a feature in the intellectual equipment of the great Anglican divines. He had himself read Aquinas, not only from his love of theology and dialectics, but as one of the keys to the mastery of Dante, who was steeped in Aquinas. He had also read Albert Magnus; and having had occasion to quote Peter Lombard to him with reference to a theological controversy in which I happened to be engaged, I found that he had read the "Master of the Sentences" also, although he did not profess to know him as he knew his Aquinas and Albert the Great. His favourite among the Fathers was St. Augustine, with whose voluminous works he was so familiar that when he had occasion to quote him he knew at once where to find the passage he wanted. During the controversy on the so-called Athanasian Creed in 1871, I wrote a book on the subject in the form of a letter to Mr. Gladstone, and being anxious to be accurate in my statement of the exact place held by the Creed in the Church of Rome, I asked Dr. (he was not yet Cardinal) Newman if he would kindly revise the proof sheets. With his habitual kindness to me, he did so; and in one of his letters he made the singular remark: "I am not up in St. Augustine as Mr. Gladstone is." I showed the letter to Mr. Gladstone. "That can only be Newman's humility," he said; "he must mean that he does not know St. Austin as he knows his Athanasius, which he has at his fingers' ends." Another favourite author of Mr. Gladstone's was St. Bernard. I have known him, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, translate one of St. Bernard's sermons, and send it with a letter of condolence to a friend who had just lost her husband.

Breadth of his Theological Knowledge.

His Favourite Patristic Writers.

These are illustrations not only of the width of his theological reading, but of his thorough digestion and assimilation of what he read, so that it was available at a moment's notice. His memory had not only the quality of retentiveness in a rare degree, but it had another quality still rarer, and indeed, in my experience, unique — I mean its power of reproducing its contents panoramically, so that they could all be seen at a glance, co-ordinated and labelled for immediate use according to the subject in hand. Thus you may find within the compass of one essay apposite illustrations or arguments drawn from Greek and Latin poets, philosophers, and historians; St. Augustine; Tertullian; Dante; an English novel; and a volume of "Shaker Sermons," published in America. And sometimes he let slip

His Memory.

* Works, vols. vii. 249; xiii. 34.

an incidental remark, or dropped a chance bit of criticism, which exhibited his erudition in a novel light, and proved that, as he read, his mind went on drawing and registering inferences in all directions. In the autumn of 1875, for example, he sent me from Hawarden a proof of a beautiful Latin translation which he had made of the hymn, "Art thou weary, art thou languid?" and asked me if I could find out for him whether Neale's version was really a translation from a Greek hymn, as it professed to be, or an original composition by Neale himself. He suspected that it was the latter from one phrase, "Jordan past," which he declared could hardly have occurred in an old Greek hymn, or indeed in any hymn before the period of the Reformation, when Old Testament imagery was first introduced into Christian hymnody. For the original of the hymn Neale refers to St. Stephen the Sabbaite, a Greek monk of the eighth century. I looked out the reference and found that Mr. Gladstone's scepticism was completely justified. The idea of the hymn may have been suggested by a passage in Stephen; but the rest was entirely Neale's, and there was certainly nothing to correspond with "Jordan past."

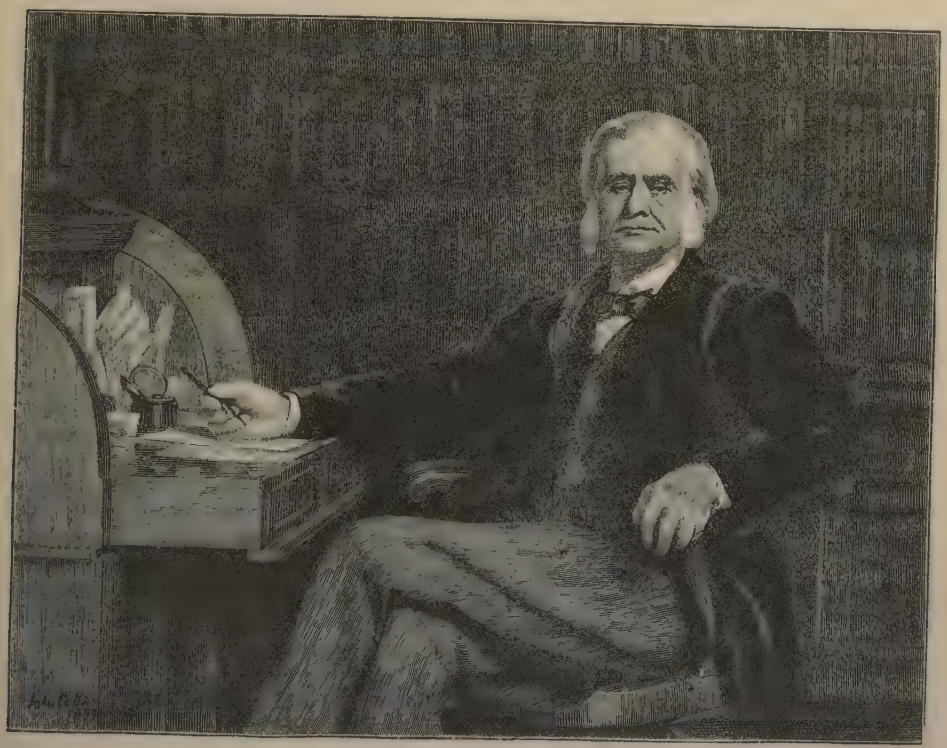
Origin of a Famous Hymn.

I give that as one out of many illustrations of the minuteness as well as variety of his knowledge, and of the way in which he always had it ready to hand. I once said to him that I supposed he possessed the faculty of reading very rapidly and picking the brains out of a book as he glanced over its pages. "On the contrary," he replied, "I am a deliberate and rather slow reader, but I read methodically and don't waste time." Doubtless his power of concentrated attention, which made such an impression on Lord Rosebery, and which was certainly very remarkable, enabled him to economise time to an extent which would surprise us if we could see the net gain at the end of each year. It was to this faculty more than to genius that Newton attributed his success as a philosopher and discoverer. And the contrary habit of inattention and mental truancy is probably a greater "thief of time" than "procrastination," which has proverbially got the credit of it. This habit of concentrated thinking enabled Mr. Gladstone to carry on more than one process of thought at one time. He could, for instance, add up simultaneously and with great rapidity the four columns of a long compound addition sum, and carry in his head at one time two different trains of thought. I remember a walk with him in the woods of Hawarden one day when he made a short digression from the subject which he was discussing, and then exclaimed, "What was I talking about? Dear me! I can no longer carry on two different processes of thought at one time, as I used to be able to do. It is a sign of old age"—the year was 1873—"and I ought to retire from public life. I am sixty-four, and I have a strong opinion that a man should not be Prime Minister after he is sixty-four. His best days are over, and he is more likely to damage than to enhance his reputation by a longer tenure of office. Look at —— and ——. Both stayed in office too long, and during the last few years of their lives each has been showing how easy it is to make a great man into a little one." How little did he then anticipate that he was himself destined to be Prime

His Power of Concentration.

Minister three times more, and retire from public life twenty years later at the age of eighty-four, having in the interval surpassed some of the achievements of his prime!

His general position with respect to the Old Testament may be inferred from the following quotation from his "General Introduction" to "The People's Bible":—



PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

*(From the Painting by the Hon. John Collier.)*

"It is not necessary here to inquire whether each and every portion of the books ascribed to Moses had him for its author, or whether, besides the palpable case of the chapter which relates to his death, other additions, in furtherance and exposition of his career, may have been made. Christendom at large, as well as the Jewish nation, firmly believe that he and none other was the great legislator of the Jewish race; that the vital substance of his legislation remains embodied in the Pentateuch; and, as it may be added, that never in human history was any legislation so profoundly and so durably stamped upon the life, character, and experiences, even down to the visible and clamant witness of the present day, of those to whom it was addressed."

**Attitude towards the Old Testament.**

I have observed a disposition, growing into a fashion, among a certain class of critics, not so much to argue against Mr. Gladstone's views on this subject and on the question of Homer, as to waive him courteously aside, as an amateur seeking to reopen questions which have

been conclusively and finally settled by experts. That was the tone adopted by these critics in the controversy between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Huxley on the cosmogony of Genesis, and it was Mr. Huxley's own tone. Now the simple truth is that, on the question in dispute, Mr. Huxley had no scientific superiority over Mr. Gladstone. He was an eminent biologist; but it was not a question of biology, but rather of geology, astronomy and palæontology, sciences in which Mr. Huxley himself was an amateur. He somewhat arrogantly rebuked Mr. Gladstone for having neglected to consult the works of Professor Dana, whom Mr. Huxley saluted as an expert of authority. Unfortunately for Mr. Huxley, not only had Mr. Gladstone studied the works of Professor Dana, but Professor Dana himself took Mr. Gladstone's part in a letter in which he said: "I agree in all essential points with Mr. Gladstone, and believe that the first chapters of Genesis and science are in accord." What Mr. Gladstone undertook to prove, and which Mr. Huxley certainly did not disprove, was that the cosmogony of Genesis differs so generically from all other cosmogonies in its substantial conformity with the main conclusions of physical science, that this peculiarity can only be explained on the assumption of a Divine revelation, or of a primeval tradition handed down through the Abrahamic branch of what Mr. Gladstone calls "the Adamic race."

The Controversy with Mr. Huxley and Dr. Réville.

That there should not have been a literal correspondence between Genesis and modern science was inevitable. For, assuming the compiler of Genesis, for argument's sake, to have been thoroughly well acquainted with the discoveries of modern science, the question arises whether he could have been more accurate, in conformity with his purpose, than he actually has been. His purpose evidently was ethical and religious, namely, to teach the people of that age that the visible universe was created by one Supreme Being in an orderly series of successive achievements culminating in man. The problem for the writer of Genesis, therefore, was how to reconcile scientific accuracy of statement with the religious presentment of facts which it was his main purpose to convey; in other words, how to impart the maximum of religious instruction with the minimum of scientific inaccuracy. Is it certain that even Mr. Huxley would have been able, under similar conditions, to acquit himself better than the author of Genesis has done? Why, even now, with the latest scientific lights gleaming around us, we are obliged to accommodate our language to the illusions of the senses rather than to the facts of science, as when we speak of the sun rising and setting, or of new moons and old. If the writer of Genesis had conformed more accurately than he has done to the revelations of modern science, he would have discredited the whole of his narrative for thousands of years, and thus defeated his primary motive in writing at all, namely, the inculcation of moral and religious truths. His record of creation is unique among ancient cosmogonies. Reject the doctrine of a Divine revelation, either to his own mind or operating through a treasured tradition, and his success must be admitted to be inexplicable. That is, in substance, Mr. Gladstone's argument in his controversy with Dr. Réville and Mr. Huxley; and it was assuredly not upset, it was hardly even grappled with, by his antagonists.

But it was not with the cosmogony of Genesis alone that Mr. Gladstone's eager and versatile genius prompted him to deal. He entered into a searching scrutiny of the attempt made by the Higher Criticism to divorce the entire Pentateuch from any real connection, literary or otherwise, with Moses. According to that theory the Pentateuch in the mass was a pious fraud perpetrated by the priestly caste at the period of the Exile, or even later with respect to portions of it. Moses is admitted to have been an historical personage, though on what ground is not clear, since the Pentateuch is our only authority for his existence; but the Higher Criticism "questions even his connection with the Decalogue." In his examination of this theory Mr. Gladstone exhibits all the resources not only of a keen dialectician, but, in addition, of an erudite scholar. He had read and mastered, in his usual thorough manner, the works of Wellhausen and his school in the original. And while he gracefully yields, "not only respectful attention, but provisional assent, to the conclusions of linguists in their own domain," he maintains that "in the examinations directed to the matter as opposed to the form, their authority is of a less stringent character, and may even decline to zero. The historical aspects and relations which open out this field are not theirs exclusively, and we may canvass and question their conclusions, just as it is open to us to proceed with the conclusions of Macaulay or Grote." And he characterises the mode of reasoning which has involved the whole Pentateuch in "the general discredit of a mythical or legendary inception" as a "vague, irrational, unscientific method of proceeding." "The hypothesis" of the Higher Criticism, he says, "is one reaching far beyond the province of specialism, and requiring to be tested by considerations more broadly historical." But the exigencies of space forbid me to do more here than give in succinct form some specimens of his argument.

Authorship of the Pentateuch.

1. According to the Higher Criticism the Pentateuch, especially those parts which they term the "'Priest-Code,' was devised, probably after the Exile, in the interest of the priestly order." But "the schools of the prophets established a caste which was in professional rivalry with the priesthood," and established an effective censorship over it. Is it conceivable that the prophets would have tacitly sanctioned such a gigantic forgery as the Higher Criticism alleges?

2. The Higher Criticism admits that the priests published their forgery "under the shelter of the great name of Moses." Why? Obviously "because that name had already acquired and consolidated its authority from its being inseparably attached to the original gift of the Law."

3. Considering the extraordinary pains which the Jews took (described by Mr. Gladstone) to preserve the integrity of the Pentateuch, the theory of the Higher Criticism would argue "something like hallucination on the part of" an entire nation.

4. "Moses belongs to the class of nation-makers," and the Pentateuch bears internal evidence of one masterful spirit and dominant will shaping and solidifying a nomadic tribe into a nation of singular tenacity. It is inconceivable that a band of priestly forgers could have stamped this notable characteristic on their literary fraud.

5. The sacred books and legislation traditionally ascribed to Moses undoubtedly "formed the character of the Hebrews as a separate and peculiar people." The Moses of the Pentateuch was a man eminently qualified for such an achievement. The story offered to us by the Higher Criticism, on the other hand, does not fit the circumstances, and is in parts glaringly inconsistent with them.

6. The Samaritan Pentateuch is irreconcilable with the later date assigned to the Hebrew Pentateuch by the Higher Criticism. The racial and religious feud between the Jews and Samaritans would inevitably have made it impossible for the former—if they had the disposition, which they certainly would not have had—to palm off a forgery of their priests on their jealous rivals. Yet this is the conclusion to which the Higher Criticism conducts us. It is incredible.

Mr. Gladstone has called attention to one very serious aspect of the Higher Criticism which has escaped general observation; I mean its fluid condition. It is like a moving bog, submerging to-day the position which it had but yesterday pronounced secure. As late as 1889 Wellhausen "held that Moses had a hand in the Legislative Books, many of the laws" being "without sense or purpose except in regard to circumstances which disappeared with the Mosaic period." "The legislation, in its spirit and character as a whole, is genuinely Mosaic"; and "we stand, at least as to the three middle Books" of the Pentateuch, "upon historical ground as opposed to that which is unauthenticated or legendary." All that is now abandoned, and Mr. Gladstone is more than justified in observing "that it is extremely difficult to learn whether there exists any real standing ground which the present negative writers mean not only to occupy, but to hold. Almost any representation of their views may be either supported or contradicted by citing particular expressions from their works." "With the lapse of time" the Higher—or, as Mr. Gladstone calls it, the Negative—Criticism, "continually adopts new negations." "The more conservative of the latest schools exhibit to us no principle which separates them in the mass from the bolder disintegration." So that "what is now the *ultima Thule* of the system may, a short time hence, appear only to have been a stage on the way to positions as yet undreamt of." In short, the Old Testament is, under this treatment, in process of being relegated to the region of fable.

**Fluidity of the Higher Criticism.**

Mr. Gladstone himself, however, by no means takes up an extreme position. "That alone for which I contend," he says, is "that the heart and substance of the legislative and institutional system delivered to us in the Pentateuch is historically trustworthy."

So far Mr. Gladstone is on common ground with all who hold the creed of Christendom; put more briefly, with all who accept the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation. For not a few devout Christians, and even some High Churchmen, are to be found among the adherents of the Higher Criticism. But Mr. Gladstone was not only an earnest Christian, he was also a sincere and loyal Churchman of the type which is commonly called High Church. Yet not a Nonconformist in the land was more trusted or held in higher honour than he among Nonconformists of all denominations. And this not merely, I believe, because they recognised the sincerity of his character, the purity of his motives, and the unaffected simplicity

**Mr. Gladstone's Churchmanship.**

of his piety, but because they felt that even ecclesiastically he had much in common with them, and they with him, though they might not all find it easy to put their impressions into words.

In religion, as in politics, Mr. Gladstone's views grew by a process of gradual and logical development, and he never retraced his steps. What seem to be inconsistencies in his public conduct will generally be found on closer examination to be no inconsistencies at all. "In the changing state of human affairs," says Sir James Mackintosh, "the man who is consistent to his opinions will be thought inconsistent to his politics."* "Circumstances," says Burke, "which with some gentlemen pass for nothing, give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect." † Two diametrically opposite courses of conduct at different periods may thus be evidence, not of inconsistency, but of the strictest consistency. To take an instance: Mr. Gladstone's disestablishment of the Irish Church, so far from being inconsistent with his book on "The State in its Relations with the Church," was demanded by the argument of that book. He admitted in his book that the ecclesiastical Establishment in Scotland and the Maynooth grant in Ireland were an infringement of his principle. But *factum valet*, and he acquiesced, but with the intimation that his theory of Church and State would not bear the strain of any additional inroads. So long as he defended the ecclesiastical Establishment in Ireland it was because he believed it to be a divinely ordained institution, not merely for the maintenance, but also for the propagation, of revealed truth. As it happens, one of the first speeches he made in Parliament was on the Irish Church. It was in the year 1833, on Lord Derby's proposal to abolish a large number of bishoprics and capitular establishments. He admitted that the Irish Church was overmanned for its existing needs, but not for the needs which he too sanguinely believed would be created by the activity and expansion of the Church. And he gave utterance to one pregnant sentence, which went to the core of the question: "He feared that the probable effect of the Bill would be to *place the Church on an untenable foundation.*" It was a tacit admission that the Irish Church was begun to be regarded as the permanent Church of a privileged minority, a position entirely opposed to the theory propounded five years later in Mr. Gladstone's book. In 1835 he made a speech against the Appropriation Clause, in which he took the same ground. In 1836 he made a speech on the Tithes and Church (of Ireland) Bill, in which he said:—

**Gradual Growth of Religious Views.**

**Disestablishing the Irish Church.**

"A Church Establishment is maintained either for the sake of its members or its doctrines; for those whom it teaches or for that which it teaches. *On the former ground it is not in equity tenable for a moment.* Why should any preference be given to me over another fellow-subject? or what claim have I personally to have my religion supported whilst another is disallowed by the State? No claim whatever in respect to myself. I concur entirely with gentlemen opposite, hostile to an Establishment, that no personal privilege ought in such a matter to be allowed. . . . It is the proposition of the noble lord (John Russell) which is really open to the charge of bigotry, intolerance, and

* "Memoirs," i., 130. † Works, iv., 157.

arbitrary selection; because, disavowing the maintenance and extension of truth, he continues, by way of personal privilege to the Protestants, the legal recognition of their Church which he refuses to the Church of the Roman Catholics."

Thus he spoke two years before the publication of his book on "The State in its Relations with the Church," which has been dealt with at length in another chapter of this work.* His argument, therefore, bound him to advocate the disestablishment of the Irish Church as soon as its own accredited guardians and supporters placed it definitely and finally on the ground which Mr. Gladstone emphatically declared in 1836 to be "not in equity tenable for a moment."

But it was altogether alien from his moral temper and habit of mind to precipitate events which he nevertheless saw to be inevitable. In 1845 Sir Robert Peel proposed to increase the grant to Maynooth College; and Mr. Gladstone, as is to be set out in another chapter, thereupon resigned office, and all the brilliant prospects which that important office gave him in a Government that was not only strong in the ability of its *personnel* and the number of its supporters, but which promised to be durable in addition. But he resigned, not because he objected to Sir Robert Peel's proposal—for he supported it soon afterwards by speech and vote—but to give a public pledge of his disinterestedness in his change of policy. In explaining his resignation to the House of Commons he formally discarded his published theory of Church and State, while still "believing it to be the most salutary and the best in any condition of the public sentiment that will bear its application." That condition no longer existed in England, and "therefore he held it to be his duty to apply his mind" to the consideration of the Irish Church question under its changed conditions, "free from any slavish regard to a mere phantom of consistency, and with the sole and single view of arriving at such a conclusion as, upon the whole, the interests of the country and the circumstances of the case might seem to demand."

**The Maynooth Grant.**

It is a curious illustration of the power of prejudice to close the mind against the plainest facts that when Mr. Gladstone proposed the disestablishment of the Irish Church in 1868, the book which he had formally discarded in 1845, and again in 1847, was made the basis of the most violent attacks on his consistency and political honour, and by able men, too, in evident good faith. If they had taken the trouble to master the argument of the book, together with the light cast upon it by his speeches in Parliament, they would have seen that the very book out of which they were flinging their missiles at him, left him, under the circumstances, no other alternative than political action against the privileged position of the Irish Church. What were the circumstances? In 1867 Mr. Disraeli's Government reopened the question of the Irish Church by a simultaneous policy of cutting down and "levelling up." The policy of 1833, against which Mr. Gladstone had protested as imperilling the *raison d'être* of the Establishment, was to be still further developed by the suppression of more bishoprics and the amalgamation of more parishes. And this was to be combined with a partial endowment of other religious denominations. In

* See pp. 227—235.

other words, Mr. Gladstone was invited, as leader of the Opposition, to sanction the two things which he had repeatedly denounced as fatal to the Establishment, namely plurality of State religions and the stereotyping of the Irish Church as a privileged religion in perpetuity for the Protestant minority. Thus challenged, he had no choice but that of disestablishment. He had himself laid down, fifteen years previously, the principle on which he was now forced to act. In his essay on "The Functions of Laymen in the Church," he wrote: "As the spirit of wisdom will not permit the wilful acceleration of a crisis, so when the crisis has arrived, futile efforts at procrastination can only purchase a miserable momentary respite at an

*Photo: W. Lawrence, Dublin.*

MAYNOOTH COLLEGE.

unbounded cost, and the path of safety lies only through a tempered and calculated boldness."

It may be inferred from what has now been said that Mr. Gladstone's idea of a Church was not that of a voluntary association of Christian people for the purpose of religious worship and mutual edification. On the contrary, he believed that "Christ our Lord founded the Church as a visible and organised society, by a commission from Himself"; that "He did this in the most definite and pointed way by a charge, not to the mass of believers promiscuously, but to the Apostles whom He had chosen, and whom in many significant ways He designated as His successors in carrying forward the work of the Incarnation; and, again, that this charge, far from being limited to the brief term of their personal careers upon earth, was expressly extended by a promise of His superintending presence with them (which could only mean with them and their successors)

**Theory of the Church.**

until the end of the world"; "finally, that this Church was to be the great standing witness in the world for Him and for the recovery of lost mankind."

These propositions he lays down in an essay published as late as the year 1894; and he had argued them out in an elaborate treatise of upwards of 500 pages octavo on "Church Principles Considered in Their Results," published in the year 1840, that is, three years after his book on Church and State. The volume has been out of print for more than fifty years, and appears to be very little known. I picked up a second-hand copy thirty years ago, and was fascinated by it. It is a most remarkable production from the pen of a young man of thirty, displaying great learning, intellectual fertility as well as versatility, a rare grasp of the philosophy of Christianity in its principles and their practical results, and a knowledge of theology which would have qualified him for a University chair in that science. I once remarked to a theological professor in one of our two great Universities that the book was the ablest exposition I had ever read of the philosophy of the sacramental system. "I quite agree with you," he answered, "and I always recommend my class to lose no opportunity of picking up a copy of it." Dr. Döllinger, too, had quite as high an opinion of the book as I have. About six years ago I suggested to Mr. Gladstone that he should publish a revised edition of it, and he received the suggestion favourably, and would probably have acted on it if his life had been spared a little longer.

The book consists of seven chapters, in the first of which he takes a comprehensive survey of the field which he intends to traverse in his argument; and in the second discusses the subject of Rationalism.

The third chapter deals with the rationale of the Church as an institution divinely ordained for the moral recovery of man. Moehler's phrase, that the Church is "the continuation of the Incarnation"—that is, the organ by means of which the members of the human race become partakers of the Incarnation—took root in Mr. Gladstone's mind. I have often heard him quote it.

The fourth chapter deals with "The Sacraments"; the fifth, with "The Apostolical Succession"; the sixth, with "The specific claim of the Church of England"; the seventh, which is subdivided into five sections, deals with "Church principles in relation to present circumstances," and furnishes answers to various objections brought against them.

This brief summary will give some, though an inadequate, idea of the wide area covered by the volume. The only part of it with which the limitations of space will allow me to deal is the constitution of the Christian Church, and the bearing of that question on the position of Christian communities which reject Episcopacy. Mr. Gladstone worked out his idea of the Church mainly by his own reflection and reading. Born and brought up in a religious atmosphere which was mainly Evangelical, he went up to Oxford with a mind deeply imbued with religious impressions, but without any clearly defined views as to the Church. And he left Oxford in the dawn of the Oxford movement without receiving any influence from it. I asked him about fourteen years ago if Newman exercised any influence over him. "Personally, none," he said. "I scarcely knew him at Oxford, and I have had very little intercourse with him since. I worked out my views on

Church matters chiefly alone. The only man who ever really influenced me was Hope-Scott. He could twist me round his finger; and he was the only man who could."

It was from the New Testament, read in the light reflected on it from the Old, that Mr. Gladstone derived his first idea of the Church as a corporate society appointed by God to be the guardian of revealed truth and the organ for the restoration of humanity under and in union with its Head, the Second Adam. It followed from this that the Church must be from above, not from below, ordained by God, not instituted by man. The difficulty of accepting the second view is stated by him as follows:—

"But if the Christian society, in which we live, may be fitly and Scripturally governed by men whom we ourselves appoint to offices which we ourselves define, then the idea of the Gospel as a dispensation coming from God to us is contradicted and reversed; and we are exhibited as the framers of a religious system, as bestowing on God that which He has bestowed on us; our will is assumed as the origin from which it proceeds, and our understanding, by sure if not immediate consequence, comes to be the measure of the doctrines which it propounds. If any man, or any number or body of men, may assume to themselves the ordinary ministry of the Church, then how am I, the private person, to be persuaded that this is really a dispensation in which all ultimate effect depends upon the unseen workings of the Holy Ghost, while I see the administration of the ordinances, to which this most special and assured working is attached, not regulated by any Divine law, not fenced off from common contact, but at the mercy and the pleasure of every private man according to his option, or his imagination, or his persuasion, or, what is in principle no better, of some self-constituted body, more imposing in the eyes of flesh, but not one whit better supplied with authority from the Head and Ruler of the Church. Where, it may be asked, is the right of any private Christian to administer sacraments? or of any number of private Christians either to do, or to authorise the doing, of such an act? or of any civil person? If such a right be assumed by the Christian, why need it be limited to Christians? Why may not the pagan baptise himself? I do not mean that one case of excess is not more outrageous than another, but this—that when we leave the record of Scriptural authority, realised in the practice of the Church, we shall strive in vain to limit the abuse, the profanation, for whose first commencements we shall have become responsible, and whose extreme degrees are too sure to follow." *

Mr. Gladstone thus grounded his idea of the Church on what he gathered from Holy Scripture and found ratified, as he believed, by ample historic evidence. He was, in fact, a believer in the much derided and much misunderstood doctrine of Apostolical Succession. How he reconciled that belief with his sympathy with non-episcopal denominations, and his high appreciation of their service to the cause of Christianity, we shall see later on. In discussing the question he pertinently directs attention to the fundamental difference on this subject between Presbyterians and other Protestant bodies. He quotes Presbyterian divines of authority to show that the Established Church of Scotland admits the principle of Apostolical Succession, but claims it through Presbyterian channels; whereas other Protestant bodies reject the principle, and with it the idea of the Church as a Divine institution in any other sense than that in which civil institutions may claim Divine sanction. The Protestants of Germany, on the other hand, have never "repudiated the Apostolical Succession in the Episcopate, while they continue to hold it by an intermediate arrangement in the Presbyteriate." †

But what do the upholders of this Apostolical Succession of the Christian ministry mean by the term? They are supposed, by those who

* "Church Principles Considered in their Results," p. 225. † Ibid., p. 409.

substitute supercilious scorn for rational argument, to mean that there has been from the Apostles' time to our own an irrefragable succession of a priestly caste of "magically endowed men with power to work miracles." Having labelled the doctrine with this "bad name," they leave it to the proverbial fate of the dog that has been so treated. I do not know one writer who holds this doctrine of Apostolical Succession; certainly Mr. Gladstone did not. The rational doctrine of Apostolical Succession is very different, and admits of rational treatment.

Is the Church, in matter of fact, a series of fortuitous aggregations of private Christians, locally distributed under different constitutions and rules, like political clubs, with no other principle of unity than that of common sympathies and, in a general way, common aims? May any man, or any number of men, start a Church *ad libitum*, with just as valid a power of ordaining ministers and administering sacraments as is claimed by the historic churches of Christendom? Is there no essential difference between the appointment of the Christian ministry and the election of a club committee? The descendant of Dr. Doddridge, in editing the correspondence and diary of his ancestor, gives an account (quoted by Mr. Gladstone) of the theory and practice of the English Nonconformists of his day which tallies with this description.

**The Nonconformist View of a Church.**

On this view of the Church the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession is an obvious absurdity. But is it the view which the Bible presents to us? With abundant courtesy and deference to those who hold it, Mr. Gladstone thinks not. He cannot reconcile it with the terms used of the Church by its Divine Founder and His Apostles. It is described as a "kingdom," of which Christ is the King; a body, of which Christ is the Head; a tree, of which Christ is the Trunk. These terms imply an organism, a living structure whose parts are bound together by a vital principle of unity, and discharge their separate functions, not independently of each other, but in subordination to the law of corporate life which knits the "many members" into "one body." This view of the Church excludes the idea of its being regarded as a fortuitous aggregation of units, like a school of thought, or of philosophy, or like some voluntary guild or brotherhood associated for some specific purpose. The Church, thus viewed as a visible society founded by Christ for the conservation of revealed truth and the propagation of Divine life among a race that had become spiritually anæmic from the effects of sin, Mr. Gladstone traces through the New Testament, and especially through the Pauline Epistles. This double aspect of the *raison d'être* of the Church is emphasised in St. Paul's charge to Timothy. He was to hold fast the form (ὑποτύπωσις, *i.e.* outline or summary) of sound words which had been delivered to him by the Apostle. And this creed, or summary of the Christian faith, the Apostle calls a "deposit"; "the good deposit (τὴν καλὴν παρακαταθήκην) which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." And this faith, or body of revealed truths, says another Apostle, was "delivered once for all (ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ)," to the Christian society. Here we have the difference between the truths embodied in the Christian creed and those acquired and discovered by exercise of the reasoning faculties. The former have been delivered once for all as a sacred trust, and are susceptible of infinite application,

illustration, and amplification, but exclude any heterogeneous addition, and also any other development than that of explanation and logical deduction. And this sacred deposit St. Paul bids Timothy "commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Secular knowledge might be left to the vicissitudes incident to human affairs; progression, not in a straight line, but zigzag, by devious paths and many a blunder, to fresh acquisitions. Human reason may be trusted to guard this store, and to recover what has been lost. But what St. Paul calls the "mysteries" of the Christian faith are at once more precious than secular knowledge, and less easy to recover when lost. Hence the need of a special organisation to guard the articles of the Christian faith.

**The Eastern Churches.**

Mr. Gladstone was greatly impressed by the noble fidelity of the Christians of Turkey—Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Nestorians—to the Christian faith. For centuries they have faced and endured every form of ignominy, servitude, torture, and death, and have suffered martyrdom in myriads for the sake of "the good deposit" which had come down to them "encased," as he says, "in the well-knit skeleton of a dogmatic and ecclesiastical system, such as is maintained in principle by the ancient Churches." Superstitious they might be, and ill-informed and degraded; but they had a vigorous and brave life, fed and sustained by the "faith once for all delivered to the saints;" and the question was whether that spiritual life would have survived "the destruction of the well-knit skeleton" which enclosed it. In any case it seemed clear to him that the picture of the Church delineated in the New Testament was that of a visible organic body, commissioned from above, not developed from below. Our Lord ordained His Apostles and gave them a commission to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, with a promise of His perpetual presence with the society which He was thus founding. And the Apostles similarly ordained others —St. Paul, for example, Timothy and Titus—to guard "the good deposit" and to ordain approved presbyters "in every city."

Having exhausted the argument from the New Testament as to the original constitution of the Christian Church, Mr. Gladstone passes on to the evidence supplied by ecclesiastical and secular history, of which it is impossible here to give even a crude epitome.

**Apostolical Succession and the Doctrine of Chances.**

But it has been maintained by Chillingworth and others that, assuming Episcopacy to have been the original constitution of the Church, the doctrine of chances throws such a doubt on the unbroken continuity of the succession as to invalidate its claim on our belief. Mr. Gladstone, while apologising for entering on "this rather unworthy discussion," examines the argument seriously. He maintains that "the probability of a flaw affecting the present orders of the clergy is indefinitely minute; and is not increased but diminished at each new transmission of the ordaining power." For this conclusion he gives his reasons in an interesting passage on the doctrine of chances. Seeing that three bishops are canonically required to take part in every episcopal consecration, "the chances, mathematically computed, against this contingency [of an invalid consecration], are as the third power of 8,000, or as 512,000,000,000 are to unity."

But in the last resort he fell back on his favourite Butlerian argument

of analogy. The unbroken succession of the ministry through the Episcopate seemed to him the strongest instance in all history of valid devolution of title or property. He could not think of any other case where legal succession was so well proved and so capable of demonstration in every link.

Mr. Gladstone's idea of the Church is liable to the objection that it is in itself arrogant; and that it "unchurches" non-episcopal denominations. To the former he replies that nearly every religious denomination is obnoxious to the same accusation, and that, in matter of fact, it is not true. If you believe yourself in possession of precious truths and privileges, you are not arrogant in pressing their acceptance on those who do not possess them. And was not this the claim "under which the genuine Puritans, and the whole Presbyterian body, from Cartwright downwards, contended against the Prelatical constitution of the Church of England, and against her rites and ceremonies? namely, that the entire constitution of the Church was defined in the Word of God, and that that constitution was exclusively Presbyterian?" But this feeling ought to breed humility, not arrogance. The man who believes himself in possession of superior spiritual privileges should humble himself before those who live up to their light better than he does to his.*

**Objections Repelled.**

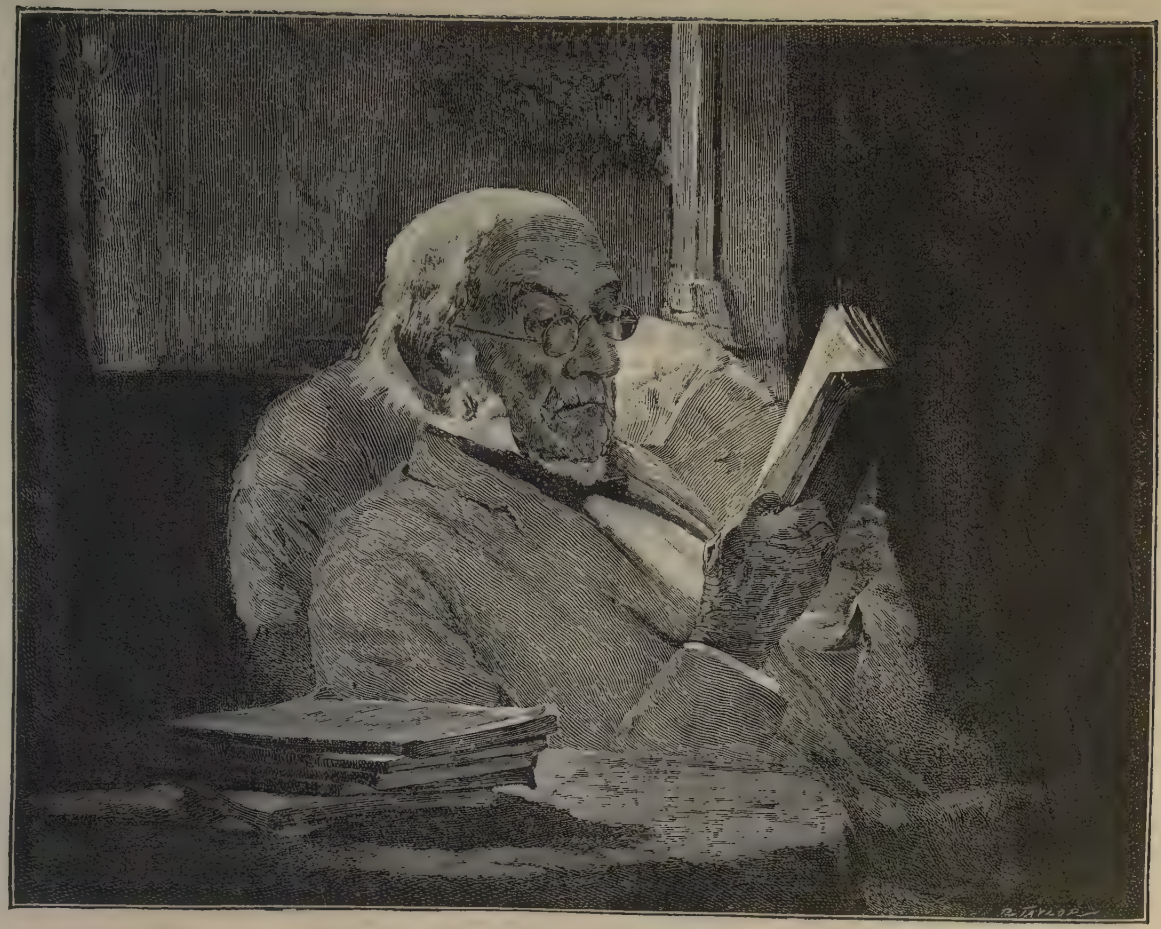
To the objection that his doctrine unchurches other Christian communities, Mr. Gladstone replies that the doctrine of some kind of succession is held by others than Episcopalians: by "many ministers of the Established Church of Scotland"; by Wesleyans, "as far as respects the administration of Baptism and the Eucharist;" by Lutherans, and by "some most learned and distinguished Germans":—

> "But it is clear that those who recognise the succession in any form as essential to a Church, are thereby laid open to precisely the same charge of unchurching others; for they 'unchurch' the Society of Friends, the Independents, the Baptists, and the other minor sections of Protestants." †

And, after all, the question of "unchurching" is a question of definition. No Christian body ought to consider itself unchurched which does not find itself robbed of anything that enters into its definition of a Church.

But Mr. Gladstone makes another answer which goes more to the heart of the question. He quotes a passage from Archbishop Laud, which he justly describes as "full alike of charity as of wisdom," and which speaks of the non-episcopal communities of his day as "retaining an internal communion with the whole visible Church of Christ in the fundamental points of faith and the performance of acts of charity." "These," says Laud, "however misled, are neither heretics nor schismatics in the sight of God, and are therefore in a state of salvation." Taking that passage for his text, Mr. Gladstone argues that we have no right to set bounds to God's channels of grace. While loyally maintaining the truth as we have received it, we are not entitled to pass judgment on others. We may trust that "the Judge of all the earth" will here, as elsewhere, "do right." We have instances in the Old and New Testament of summary

* "Church Principles," pp. 402-5. † Ibid. pp. 408-11.



MR. GLADSTONE READING.

*(From the Painting by J. McLure Hamilton in the Luxembourg Gallery, Paris.)*

retribution on persons who usurped functions to which they had not been commissioned, yet the Evangelists, on the other hand, relate the story of the man who cast out devils in Christ's name, but refused to join the company of His chosen disciples, and whom therefore they forbade. "Forbid him not," said their Master; "for there is no man that can do a miracle in my Name that can lightly speak evil of Me; for he that is not against us is on our part."*

Such was Mr. Gladstone's attitude towards Protestant Dissenters in those early days when he was described by Macaulay as the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories. His feeling towards them even then was kindly and sympathetic; always looking out for points of agreement rather than of difference, and recognising with devout thankfulness every manifestation of God's Spirit working through their ministrations; manfully cleaving to his own principles and acting on them, and leaving the rest "for Him and not for us to determine." Even then he recoiled from the hard tone of Sir William Palmer towards Dissenters in his masterly "Treatise on the Church," which Mr. Gladstone, in common with Dr. Döllinger and Cardinal Newman, so greatly admired. His attitude towards non-episcopal denominations became still further modified with the experience of years, and with the apparent acquiescence of the Divine will for the present in the disorganised and divided condition of Christendom. The reunion of Christendom was one of the dreams of his life. His Master's dying prayer for the visible unity of His Church, such a unity as would appeal persuasively to the unbelieving world, haunted him. The sectarian spirit, the temper of mind which contentedly acquiesced in division, and, still more, which erected fresh walls of separation, was hateful to him. This feeling was at the root of much of his vehemence in his controversy on Vaticanism. He had been hoping against hope for years that the Roman Church, as its temporal dominion passed gradually away, would seek compensation in mediating between the severed portions of Christendom; and he cherished every symptom that gave hope of such a consummation. In his masterly treatise on the Royal Supremacy, he quotes with pensive gladness a passage from the "Considérations sur la France" of the brilliant Count de Maistre, in which that rigid Ultramontane suggests that the Anglican Church is destined in the providence of God to do "a precious work" in the reunion of Christendom, touching, as she does, Protestantism with one hand and Catholicism with the other, and thus acting as the medium of reconciliation between them.†

**Desire for the Reunion of Christendom.**

**Vaticanism.**

The Vatican Decrees struck a severe blow at Mr. Gladstone's hope of aid from the Vatican in the direction of mutual explanations among the divided members of Christendom. And even Roman Catholics of eminence, who, of course, differed from him in the controversy on Vaticanism, understood how largely this feeling entered into Mr. Gladstone's polemic. Newman expressed it to me in sending me a presentation copy of his letter to the Duke of Norfolk; and Bishop Moriarty, a man of great cultivation and much personal charm, told Dr. Liddon and myself a humorous anecdote at his own hospitable table at Killarney, in

* "Church Principles," pp. 421, 428-9. † "Royal Supremacy," p. 87, 1st edition.

1877, which showed how thoroughly he understood Mr. Gladstone's frame of mind. "Our cardinal," he said, "was very sore about Gladstone's pamphlet. 'Your Eminence does not understand the matter,' I said. 'Mr. Gladstone has been crossed in love.' 'Crossed in love!' exclaimed the Cardinal; 'I have always given him credit for being a model of the domestic virtues. Besides, why should he attack us for that?' 'Because,' I replied, 'it is the Holy Father who has crossed him in love. He has, by the dogma of Infallibility, shattered his dream of the reunion of Christendom.'"

With the tenacity of purpose which belonged to his nature, and with his unshaken confidence in the final triumph of good over evil, and of faith over unbelief, he never threw away an opportunity of making whatever contribution he could towards the restoration of Christian unity in whatever part of the Christian commonwealth an opening was offered for his intervention. While the question of Anglican Orders was still under discussion in Rome Mr. Gladstone "received from Rome the tidings that, in the highest ecclesiastical quarters, a declaration" on the subject from him "was *vivement désiré*.*" His striking "Soliloquium" was the result. The Pope was much impressed by it, and sent a copy of it, with a most laudatory letter, to an eminent Italian ecclesiastic, who wrote to Mr. Gladstone a very interesting letter, which I have read, expressing his own and the Pope's appreciation and admiration of the service which Mr. Gladstone had in this matter done to Christendom. But other counsels prevailed at the Vatican, and the controversy was closed by a decision which evaded the essential point, and was grounded on reasons which, if capable of being sustained, would throw considerable doubt on the validity of Roman Orders.

**Validity of Anglican Orders.**

Not that Mr. Gladstone expected any immediate practical result from a recognition of the validity of Anglican Orders by the See of Rome. In this very "Soliloquium" he wrote of himself—

> "He is not one of those who look for an early restitution of such a Christian unity as that which marked the earlier history of the Church. Yet he ever cherishes the belief that work may be done in that direction which, if not majestic or imposing, may nevertheless be legitimate and solid, and this by the least as well as by the greatest."

And just as in that paper he made, for the sake of unity, every concession, which his loyalty to truth allowed him, in favour of the Church of Rome, so he had on previous occasions made similar concessions, within similar limits, in favour of all bodies of Christian Dissenters, or, as he himself has expressed it, "all who, rejecting the Papal monarchy, either reject, or at least do not accept, the doctrine of a Catholic Church, visible and historical."

**Concessions in Favour of Nonconformity.**

> "But they adhere to nearly all the great affirmations of the Creeds. They believe strongly, if not scientifically, in revelation, inspiration, prophecy; in the dispensation of God manifest in the flesh; in an atoning Sacrifice for the sin of the world; in a converting and sanctifying Spirit; in short, they accept with fulness, in parts perhaps with crude exaggerations, what are termed the doctrines of grace. It is evident that we have here the very heart of the great Christian tradition, even if that heart

* "Later Gleanings," p. 396.

be not encased in the well-knit skeleton of a dogmatic and ecclesiastical system, such as is maintained in principle by the ancient Churches. . . . And this scheme may claim, without doubt, not less truly than those which have gone before, to be a tree bearing fruit. . . . My object is to establish on its behalf that it has to a great extent made good its ground in the world of Christian fact; that it cannot be put out of the way by any expedient or figure of controversy, such as that it is a branch torn from the stem, with a life only derivative and provisional. Open to criticism it is, as may easily be shown: but it is one great factor of the Christian system as it now exists in the world." *

But, not content with this brief and informal notice of the question, he published in 1894 a formal Essay on "The Place of Heresy and Schism in the Modern Christian Church." As the Essay is easily accessible in his volume of "Later Gleanings," it will suffice here to give some of its salient points. He begins by repeating in clear and precise language his old doctrine of "the Church as a visible and organised society by a commission" from Christ Himself. To this our Lord annexed "the stringent law" of excommunication against such as should repudiate the authority of the Church. With this "the language of the Apostles coincides and, most markedly among them all, the language of St. John, who was especially the Apostle of love." "The work of heretics and schismatics was a work of the flesh, and, like other works of the flesh, it excluded from salvation."

Such is the picture which the Gospels and Epistles give us of the Church which our Lord founded. But "enormous changes" have been brought about in the interval, and the question arises whether the original stringent law against heresy and schism still prevails. In theory and in the abstract, of course, it does, for it has never been abrogated. But what about its practical application?

Do not the facts of history appear to "cast some haze upon the clear light of the Apostolic doctrine of schism, and abate the sharpness of its edge?" How can the law of schism be applied along the course of ecclesiastical history, such as the rupture, still unclosed, between the Greek and Latin Churches? The division between West and West, Rome and Avignon? The divisions of the Eastern Churches among themselves? The religious cataclysm of the sixteenth century, causing serious rents, still unhealed, in Western Christendom? Not only does the Church of England, with its unbroken continuity of organic life, maintain a vigorous and expanding life throughout the English-speaking world, but the various Protestant bodies, which have discarded the original framework of the Church, but still keep their hold on the creed of Christendom, flourish and fructify, thus presenting a marked contrast to the ancient heretical or schismatic sects, which passed like meteors over the scene. If English Nonconformity may truly be thus described, surely "we cannot dare to curse what God seems in many ways to have blessed and honoured, in electing it to perform duties neglected by others, and in emboldening it to take a forward part, not limited to our narrow shores, on behalf of the broadest interests of Christianity." Mr. Gladstone appeals, by way of example, to the honourable part taken by the Nonconformists in the extinction of negro slavery, but does not refer—probably to avoid painful contrasts—to the certainly not less honourable part taken by the Nonconformists on behalf of the Christians of Turkey.

* "The Courses of Religious Thought," pp. 12—13.

*Photo: Cathevall and Pritchard, Chester.*

ANOTHER VIEW OF MR. GLADSTONE'S STUDY AT HAWARDEN CASTLE.

Then we must bear in mind the marked distinction between the founder of a heresy or schism and his spiritual descendants. And does not God's treatment of the schismatical kingdom of Israel, with its irregular and unauthorised priesthood and idolatrous worship, suggest caution in passing judgment on irregularities less heinous among ourselves in modern Christendom? God did not abandon the schismatical kingdom of Israel, nor hold the ten tribes primarily responsible for a schism for which the principal blame was due to Solomon and Rehoboam. "To it was addressed the great representative ministry of Elijah" and other subordinate ministries; "and the recently discovered Samaritan Pentateuch" affords some presumptive evidence that in the providence of God the schismatical Israelites occupied a predestined place "within the fence of the vineyard once planted 'on a very fruitful hill.'" Mr. Gladstone's conclusion, therefore, is—

"I ask no more than that we should apply to the questions of heresy and schism, now that they have been permitted, all over Christendom, to harden into facts seemingly permanent, and to bear not thorns and thistles only, but also grapes and figs, the principles which Holy Scripture has set forth in the history of the two Hebrew kingdoms, and which a just and temperate use of the method of analogy may extract from the record."

But does it follow from this that "the Catholic Churchman"—*i.e.* "one who adheres with firmness to the ancient or Catholic Creeds of the Church," with their historical environment—should surrender any part of his heritage? In other words, "Is it the effect, it may be asked, the drift of these explanations, to land us in the substitution, for our ancient and historical Christianity, of what is known as undenominational religion?" The question has two aspects, "one of them in the highest degree cheering and precious"; the other "disguising a pitfall, into which whosoever is precipitated will probably find that the substance of the Gospel has escaped, or is fast escaping, from his grasp." Mr. Gladstone accordingly divides undenominationalism into "genuine" and "spurious." The genuine he describes in a passage of glowing eloquence, which want of space obliges me to reduce to a few bald sentences, just enough to enable the reader to follow him.

**Genuine Undenominationalism.**

The number of professing Christians in the world is about four hundred and fifty millions. But "there is no longer one fold under one visible Shepherd; and the majority of Christians (though the minority"—*i.e.* Roman Catholics—"is a large one) is content with its one Shepherd in heaven, and with the other provisions He has made on earth." Christendom is "broken up into hundreds of sections," and these are in a state of chronic warfare. "Each makes it a point to understand his neighbour not in the best sense, but in the worst; and the thunder of anathema is in the air." Yet in the midst of all these divisions, antagonisms, and disintegrations, we find a wonderful unanimity in the profession of the cardinal articles of the Christian Faith—the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit through which the means of grace are supplied. In contemplating this fact Mr. Gladstone says: "I bow my head in amazement before this mighty moral miracle, this marvellous concurrence from the very heart of discord."

So much as to the "genuine undenominationalism." Now for the "spurious." Here Mr. Gladstone reverts to his doctrine that "from every page of the Gospel we find that the great message to be conveyed to the world, in order to its recovery from sin, was to be transmitted through a special organisation." We have already seen what, in his view, that special organisation is. Here he waives all discussion as to the nature of the organisation; "whether it was the Popedom, or the Episcopate, or the Presbyterate, or the Christian flock at large consecrated and severed from the world by baptism." For the present purpose the point on which he insists is "that there was a society, that this society was spiritual, that it lay outside the natural and the civil order." These two societies have each its own appointed sphere, and must not intrude into each other's province. Nowhere does he find "this essential difference between the temporal and the spiritual kingdoms laid down with a bolder and firmer hand than in the confessional documents of the Scottish Presbyterian system." The splendid "examples of self-sacrifice and faith" furnished by Scotch Presbyterianism "may be due to that Christian courage." Here follows a passage so characteristic, and at the same time so important, that it cannot well be omitted in any fair estimate of Mr. Gladstone as a theologian:—

Spurious Undenominationalism.

"Conversely, of all the counterfeits of religion, there is, in my view, none so base as that which passes current under the name of Erastianism, and of which it has been my privilege to witness, during the course of the present century, the gradual decline and almost extinction, especially among the luminaries of the political world. This is not a question between a clergy and a laity; but between the Church and the world. Divine revelation has a sphere no less than a savour of its own. It dwelt of old with the prophets, the priests, and the congregation; it now dwells with the Christian people, rulers and ruled; and this strictly in their character as Christian people, as subjects of God the Holy Ghost engaged with them in the Holy warfare, which began with the entrance of sin into the world, and which can never end but with its expulsion. Foul fall the day when the persons of this world shall, on whatever pretext, take into their uncommissioned hands the manipulation of the religion of our Lord and Saviour. The State, labouring in its own domain, is a great, nay, a venerable object; so is the family. These are the organic units, constitutive of human societies. Let the family transgress and usurp the functions of the State; its aberrations will be short, and a power it cannot resist will soon reduce its action within proper limits. But the State is, in this world, the master of all coercive means; and its usurpations, should they occur, cannot be checked by any specific instruments included among standing social provisions. If the State should think proper to frame new creeds by cutting the old ones into pieces and throwing them into the caldron to be reboiled, we have no remedy except such as may lie hidden among the resources of the providence of God. It is fair to add that the State is in this matter beset by severe temptations; the vehicle through which these temptations work will probably, in this country at least, be supplied by popular education."

A certain number of educationists, including not a few professing Christians, might, "in particular regions or conjunctures of circumstances," obtain such influence that "it would be very easy to frame an undenominational religion much to their liking, divested of many salient points needful in the view of historic Christendom for a complete Christianity. Such a scheme the State might be tempted to authorise by law in public elementary teaching; nay, to arm it with exclusive and prohibitory powers as against other and more developed methods, which the human conscience, sole legitimate arbiter in these matters, together with the Spirit of God, may have devised for itself in the more or less successful effort to obtain this guidance. It is in this direction that we have lately been moving, and the motion is towards a point where a danger signal

is already lifted. Such an undenominational religion as this could have no promise of permanence. None from authority, for the assured right to give it is the negation of all authority. None from piety, for it involves at the very outset the surrender of the work of the Divine Kingdom into the hands of the civil ruler. None from policy, because any and every change that may take place in the sense of the constituent bodies, or any among them, will supply for each successive change precisely the same warrant as was the groundwork of the original proceeding. Whatever happens, let Christianity keep its own acts to its own agents, and not make them over to hands which would justly be deemed profane and sacrilegious when they came to trespass on the province of the sanctuary."

**Erastianism more Dangerous than Unbelief.**

Mr. Gladstone had a genuine horror of Erastianism, which he considered a more dangerous foe to religion than open unbelief. Cæsar bringing gifts into the sanctuary was more to be dreaded than Cæsar sending "the Christians to the lions." The intervention of the civil power in the spiritual sphere, fashioning its creed and worship, was in his eyes a usurpation certain to corrode the very heart of Christianity, and to prove in the long run fatal not to the Church only, but to the State as well. More than half a century ago he wrote an elaborate and very powerful criticism on "The Theses of Erastus" in one of our periodicals, which unfortunately has not been republished, and he has dealt the Erastian theory many a hard blow since then. His antipathy to it had much to do with the foundation of St. Deiniol's Library and Hostel at Hawarden. He told me that what he feared for the Church of England was not so much Disestablishment as Erastianism, and he expected that if Disestablishment came it would be due to a movement from within against a domineering Erastianism rather than from external assault. The spread of Erastianism would, further, operate against the study of theology, and there was thus the danger of an unlearned clergy, unlearned especially in theological science. He hoped, accordingly, that others would follow his example, and that eventually every diocese at least would have an institution like St. Deiniol's for the encouragement of Divine learning.

**The Butler Studies.**

It is impossible at the end of a chapter already extended beyond the prescribed limits to deal even in a cursory way with Mr. Gladstone's edition of Butler's works together with his own "Subsidiary Studies." But a few observations suggested by that labour of love may fittingly close this most inadequate sketch of one side of Mr. Gladstone's many-sided character. His Butler might well be called a *magnum opus* even if written by a man of half his years. His contributions as editor alone, in the lucid arrangement of the argument, the illustrative and explanatory notes, the introduction, and, not least, the index, all by his own hand, must have required much thought and great labour. He seems to have read everything that had ever been written about Butler either in this country or abroad. And what a wide and varied field his volume of "Subsidiary Studies" covers. It is divided into two parts. The first consists of eleven chapters, dealing with Butler's method; with its application to the Scriptures; with his censors; with Butler's position as compared with the ancients; with Butler's qualities, under six heads; with points in his teaching, under three heads; with his theology; with points of metaphysics raised by the text; with the Butler-Clarke correspondence; with Butler's celebrity and influence; and with a general summary. Part II. contains ten more essays, in which Mr. Gladstone

discusses a number of the most profound problems bearing on man's life here and hereafter. Five chapters are devoted to various schemes and theories regarding man's future life. This is followed by chapters on Necessity or Determinism, on Theology, on Miracle, on the Mediation of Christ, on Probability as the guide of life. The chapter on Mediation is remarkable for two reasons: first, it is an extremely acute and close piece of reasoning; secondly, it was written in an interleaved copy of Butler when Mr. Gladstone was an undergraduate at Oxford at the age of twenty. Some of the essays reveal a side of Mr. Gladstone's mind which probably few even of those who knew him suspected; I mean his aptitude for and extensive reading in metaphysics. He had read Plato's Dialogues and Aristotle's Metaphysics several times with critical attention, and was ready at a moment's notice to discuss any point, however abstruse, raised in either. He was quite familiar with the English and Scotch schools of metaphysics, and was deeply read in the metaphysical writers of France and Germany. What, indeed, had he not read? Döllinger, himself a man of encyclopædic knowledge, knew what he was saying when he declared to me that, taking Mr. Gladstone all round, he considered him the most accomplished theologian in England. And yet the man who received this testimonial from the greatest theologian of Germany did not consider himself a theologian at all! To those who have sometimes been filled with mingled wonder and despair by a chance glimpse of the vast range of his knowledge, there is something inexpressibly touching in the unaffected expressions of humility which sometimes escape him. In one of his essays on Butler he thinks it not unlikely that "persons of more experience and perspicacious reflection than himself" may find him tripping. "Should this be so, I can only regret my being unequal to discharging the duty of an intelligent disciple of Butler." In another place he professes to write, "not as a teacher of religion, but as a private Christian, obliged like his brethren to serve the truth as best he can."

**Mr. Gladstone's Humility.**

Surprise has been expressed, and by persons whose intellectual eminence and learning lend great weight to their opinion, at Mr. Gladstone's views on "natural immortality." Mr. Gladstone does not commit himself positively against natural immortality, although his opinion tended in that direction. He had been thinking it over for years. I remember, some twenty years before his death, dropping a remark in a sermon at Hawarden to the effect that there was no such thing as independent life outside the Infinite Creator, and that if God were but to withdraw His sustaining presence the whole universe of created life would instantly collapse and cease to be. Referring to this in the course of that afternoon, he said, "That was a true remark, but obvious when one thinks. Yet how seldom people take the trouble of thinking out their beliefs. Do you believe in the natural immortality of man?" I was taken aback for the moment, and then answered that I could not imagine any created life naturally deathless, since that would imply existence independent of God, which seemed to me equivalent to a denial of God's absolute and unique sovereignty. "To be sure," he said: "the theory of natural immortality has no place among the *credenda* of the Church." His recently published Essay on the subject is thus evidently the conclusion of long and careful meditation. But, with his usual moderation,

**Views on Natural Immortality.**

his public statement on the subject is less positive than his private opinion. He aims at no more than an "endeavour to strip it of its acquired character as a doctrine of religion, and to exhibit it as a contested and undecided matter of philosophical speculation, upon which we do not possess material sufficient to warrant the assertion of any religious duty either to affirm or to deny."

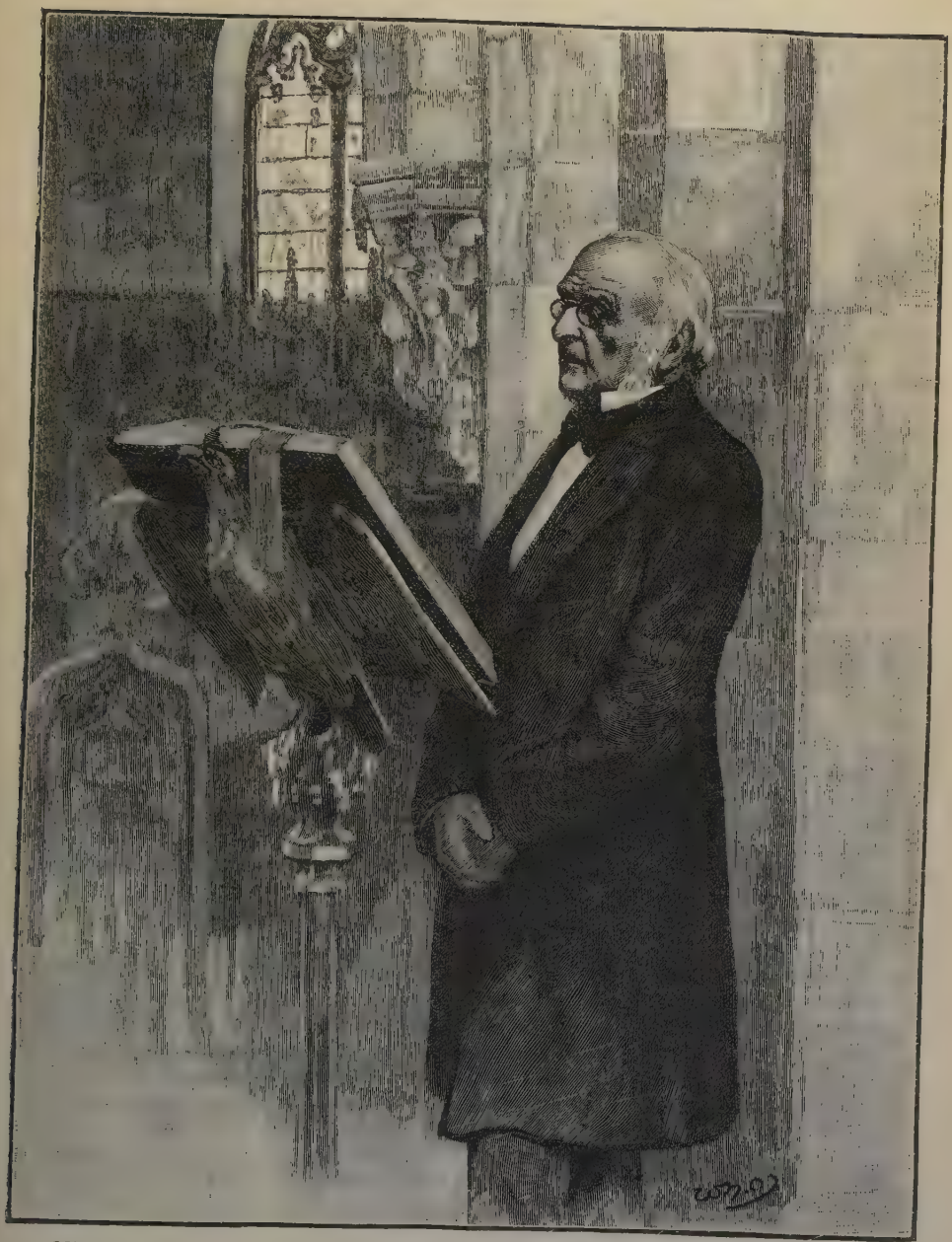
**Eternal Punishment.**

Mr. Gladstone's views on the eternity of punishment are expressed with reverent reserve, and he suggests that the "great diversity of delineation" with which the subject is treated by our Lord and the writers of the New Testament "may possibly indicate a purpose of reserve." He is not friendly to "the forensic view of the question," and prefers Butler's idea of punishment following sin "by way of natural consequence." Human nature is capable of terrible and undreamt-of possibilities, and it will be at his peril that man wilfully sins.

**The Future Life.**

In his chapter on "The Schemes in Vogue" regarding man's future life he throws out a number of interesting suggestions, without concluding dogmatically either way. He holds with Butler that "persons who have not during this life actually crossed the line which divides righteousness from its opposite"—who have not, in fact, become, in Aristotle's phrase, "incorrigible"—may be capable of amendment in the future life. And since the soul does not sleep in death, but is awake and active, it follows that "the Christian dead are in a progressive state; and the appointed office of the interval between death and resurrection is reasonably believed to be the corroboration of every good and holy habit, and the effacement of all remains of human infirmity and vice;" and it may be that in some cases "the redeeming and consummating process will not be accomplished without an admixture of salutary and accepted pain." Prayers for the departed is a natural inference from this doctrine. Accordingly, "the Church has walked in the path opened for it by St. Paul through his prayer on behalf of Onesiphorus." I remember his saying to me, years ago, that he could not see how prayers for the dead could be condemned without undermining the doctrine of prayers for the living.

But what about "those among the departed (if such there be) who are not beneficially affected by the post-mortuary stages of their discipline?" Since life for us is "an onward movement from a beginning to a consummation, and death appears to be much more than a mere accident of that movement, and nothing less than a great crisis, preparatory and auxiliary to a completion," it follows that in those incorrigible beings "a disintegrating power of deterioration may be actively at work," resulting possibly in "great losses and decay of faculty, great reduction and contractions of the scale and of the sphere of existence." In brief, he suggests that the effect of sin on natures proved incapable of profiting, "here or hereafter, by remedial laws," "might, without leaving identity or personality in any respect impaired," be such as to afford an indefinitely large relief from active penalty, at the cost of a descent in the rank of being, which perhaps also may be indefinitely large." But he commits himself to no positive affirmation or negation. "I open," he says, "one or two of the doors of mere speculation, to remind other speculators that they are many; that the prospect which they disclose



MR. GLADSTONE READING THE LESSONS IN HAWARDEN CHURCH.

is not inviting to the cautious and thoughtful mind; and I suggest again and again the question whether there is any safer course than to accept the declarations of Holy Scripture, which award the just doom of suffering to sin, and leave the sin, and suffering too, where alone they can be safely left, in the hands of the Divine and unerring Judge. I recommend none of these speculations. But I contend that there is no just title to exclude them from the view of those who are not contented with the ancient reserve."

In the same reverent and modest spirit he discusses a number of the speculations which have in modern times been hazarded on man's prospects in the future life; such as the theories of universalism, of conditional immortality, the final annihilation of the incorrigible. And his conclusion is that the wisest plan is to avoid speculation altogether, and trust to the love and wisdom of the God who made and has redeemed us, in the implicit belief that He will do whatever is best. He is jealous of all attempts "to vindicate the ways of God to man." He considers it presumptuous. "It is a very serious matter to undertake at all the vindication of the character of the Divine Being. Especially is it so for us, who do so little to maintain, improve, or repair our own." "Faith and reason unite to assure us that the world to come will be a world of readjustment; where the first shall be last, and the last first, and where both good and evil shall uniformly receive their just reward. This answer covers the whole ground."

Where Knowledge Ends.

The hope may be expressed that this most valuable edition of Butler, which is not likely to be superseded, will revive the study of that great writer, of whom the lamented Archer Butler says truly that acquaintance with him is "an epoch" in a man's intellectual life, and to whose supremacy as a thinker such diverse minds as Newman, John Stuart Mill, and Gladstone did homage. Mr. Gladstone's monumental edition would have been a remarkable achievement for an intellectual athlete in his prime. That it should have been undertaken by a veteran statesman in his eighty-fourth year, and accomplished so successfully, is not the least among the many feats of intellectual and moral energy which have made Mr. Gladstone tower above his contemporaries. And not the least noteworthy feature in it is the style, which is lucid, vigorous, dignified, sometimes brilliant, and with hardly any of the involved and parenthetical sentences which made his early writings so much inferior to his speaking.

Perhaps the foregoing pages may help a little to enable those who knew him only by name to understand the secret of his influence, never so great as at the pathetic close of his great career. It was because he had set God always before him, and ever lived as in His presence. Never making any display of his religion, he was never ashamed of it. It pervaded his whole life and character so entirely that it could not escape observation. It was part of the man, not something put on for an occasion. It determined his conduct in all affairs, public and private. Thus men knew by instinct that religion and virtue and all that pertained to the dignity and nobility of human nature must be treated with due respect in his presence. Fond as he was—no man fonder—of fun and anecdote and humour, there was that about him, an unseen, impalpable influence,

Mr. Gladstone's Piety.

which checked levity whenever it approached the confines of religion and social propriety, whether in the presence or absence of women. No man would hazard a coarse story in Mr. Gladstone's presence.

> "His strength was as the strength of ten,
> Because his heart was pure."

Another of his characteristics was his habitual desire to find points of agreement rather than of difference with persons belonging to other communions or parties than his own, and to discern what was best rather than what was worst in everyone. And so it happened that the greatest lay-Churchman in the history of the Church of England, and one of the most loyal, commanded the enthusiastic loyalty and devotion of all Protestant denominations, who, I fear, appreciated and understood him better than the great mass of the clergy of his own Church. Nonconformists felt that they too had a share in this great Churchman. And so, indeed, they had. In religious matters he agreed with them, for the most part, in all that they affirmed, and rejoiced to find that the truths they held in common were so many and so important. They, on their part, respected his manful loyalty to his principles in matters on which they differed, and appreciated the humility which made him admire their Christian conduct all the more from what he might conscientiously regard as defects in their system. It is easy for good men to differ even on fundamental questions, provided they respect each other's convictions and motives. Mr. Gladstone's was one of those strong natures which must arouse antagonism in the unavoidable conflicts of public life. It was impossible to be neutral about him. But the pathetic close of his strenuous life revealed the real man, and extorted from civilised mankind an outburst of sympathetic appreciation which is probably unique alike in its unanimity and universality. It was not chiefly the great orator, and statesman, and man of letters, that made so deep and widespread an impression, but the "great Christian man," as Lord Salisbury truly said, who was always inspired by lofty ideals and never turned his back on the claims of duty. The preceding pages may perchance help to explain the secret of his influence.

**A Sympathetic Thinker.**

MALCOLM MACCOLL.

MET. BOROUGH OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES POPLAR

# CHAPTER VI.

## MR. GLADSTONE AND THE REFORM OF THE TARIFF—1841-1846.

Transition—Another Election Address—Mr. Gladstone appointed Vice-President of the Board of Trade—The Parliamentary Situation—Greville on Peel—An Old Secretary's Recollections—A Dinner with Bunsen—Stafford Northcote—The Poor Law—Colonial Duties on Foreign Imports—Railway Regulation—The Corn Laws (1842)—Peel Imposes the Income Tax—Reforming the Tariff—Political Economy—Taxing Lobsters and Turbots—Importation of Cattle—Effects of the New Tariff—Cobden on Gladstone—Mr. Gladstone Obtains a Pension for Wordsworth—His Progress towards Free Trade—Commercial Policy of Other Nations—Low-paid Labour—Distress in the Country—Restrictions on Trade the Cause—The Anti-Corn Law League in 1843—Mr. Gladstone a Free Trader—His Asceticism—Becomes President of the Board of Trade and a Cabinet Minister—Legalising the Exportation of Machinery—An Attack by Villiers—The Effects of Protection—Sheil's Forecast—The Grattan Club—Tractarianism in 1845—Ward's "Ideal Church"—The Maynooth Grant: Mr. Gladstone Resigns—Why he Did So—Results of Tariff Reform—Further Tariff Reform (1845)—Spanish Colonial Sugar—A Projected Tour in Ireland—In Germany—Mr. Gladstone Colonial Secretary—The Mutiny of the Dukes—Retirement from Newark—A Farewell Letter.

"IN the first fourteen years of my political life I was a member of the Conservative party." * Mr. Gladstone's statement is, of course, perfectly true, but it would not justify a biographer in including the narrative of the years 1841-6 under the heading "Mr. Gladstone as a Tory."

**Transition.**

When Canning admitted a Liberal element into his Government, rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, encouraged freedom abroad, and, with the help of Huskisson, made an opening towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations, he was inaugurating a new epoch in our political history. In Bulwer-Lytton's words, Canning's refusal to serve under a military Premier, and the manner in which he created the remarkable Ministry of 1827, "led to the forming of a larger Liberal party capable of conducting the affairs of the country, and to a series of divisions in that Conservative party which had so long governed it." But Canning was a most devout and orthodox worshipper of the British Constitution. On that topic he was a Parliamentary Blackstone or a platform Coke. His attitude to electoral reform was that of the most uncompromising Tory. Disfranchising Grampound, he would save Old Sarum. In the period which we have now passed by, Mr. Gladstone left both Peel and Canning far behind in the strength of his ecclesiastical leanings. Rejecting the Liberal spirit in matters religious, he had had little or no opportunity of displaying it in matters commercial; and, as regards the Constitution, he was an extreme Canningite—a stern and unbending Tory.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, accurately to mark each upward step in the progressive development of a nation or an individual. Yet

* Speech, July 11th, 1884.

we may sometimes point to the accident, at any rate, the material cause, which accelerates a great transition. Without doubt, in Mr. Gladstone's case this cause or accident was his acceptance of the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade in the Government of Sir Robert Peel.

In an address to the electors of Newark, which he issued immediately after the dissolution of Parliament, Mr. Gladstone indicated his position as a follower of Peel upon the two great social and economic problems of the day :—

Another Election Address, 1841.

"There are two questions among those at present agitated which will naturally excite a peculiar interest among you; those, namely, relating to the Poor Law and to the Corn Law. With regard to the former, I rejoice that the late House of Commons has sanctioned some proposals intended to prevent severity in the administration of relief, and has rejected others which tend unduly to enlarge the powers of the central authority. It would be my desire, as a Member of the New Parliament, to contribute to such an adjustment of the law, as while securing support for the destitute, the liberal treatment of the aged, sick, and the widowed Poor, and the reasonable discretion of the local administrators of the law, should likewise effectually preclude the recurrence of former abuses, and should encourage the industry, and promote the comforts, of the independent labourer.

"With respect to the Corn Law, I wish for a just balance of the great interests of the Country; I regard the protection of native agriculture as an object of the first economical and national importance, and I am of opinion that such protection should be given, for the sake both of the producer and the consumer, by means of a graduated scale of duties upon Foreign Grain." *

The Poor Law.

Experience had shown the immense superiority of the Poor Law of 1834—one of the many beneficial reforms which may be traced through the activity of his disciples to the speculative legislation of Bentham; and happily no statesman could be found sufficiently corrupt or pliable to yield to the clamour annually renewed by the leaders of the disbanded army of State-created paupers. But if the old Poor Law had encouraged pauperism, the Corn Laws were still producing starvation. In the decade which followed the passing of the Reform Act the English people were rapidly becoming conscious of a host of intolerable burdens; and the very multiplicity of the grievances retarded their redress. An agitation for Constitutional reform was premature; consequently the Chartists were leaderless. But Chartism distracted masses of opinion which might have been utilised for practical ends; so too that ferment of loose emotionalism which had just been christened Socialism—a name as flabby as the thing. An enthusiastic visionary like Robert Owen had been able, to persuade many, who had hearts to feel though not eyes to see, that universal happiness could be instantaneously secured by reconstituting society and redistributing wealth. † But the Anti-Corn Law League, founded by Cobden in the winter of 1838-9,

The Corn Laws.

* The address was dated 8th June, 1841, and was written from 13, Carlton House Terrace.

† *Cf.* Mr. Graham Wallas's Life of Francis Place, p. 64:—"Jan. 7th, 1836. Mr. Owen this day has assured me [Place], in the presence of more than thirty other persons, that within six months the whole state and condition of society in Great Britain will be changed, and all his views will be carried fully into effect."

was now beginning to emphasise the priority of the Free Trade movement. The great London organiser, Francis Place, had already in 1840 given up Parliamentary reform in its favour; and we shall see in this chapter how Peel and Gladstone, taking up the work of tariff reform where it had been left by Pitt's financial successor, found themselves ultimately committed by the pressure of circumstances and the growth of conviction to the total abolition of the Corn Laws and a final breach with the country squires.

At Newark Mr. Gladstone and his colleague, Lord John Manners (afterwards Duke of Rutland), one of the "Young Englanders," achieved an easy victory at the poll, although the Whigs, as usual, had the best of it at the hustings. Indeed, Mr. Gladstone's speech at the hustings was interrupted so much that there was no proper report even in the faithful *Newark Times*. But the editorial *We* made up for the failure of the reporter. "What little we could hear of Mr. Gladstone's speech appeared to us to be the masterpiece of the day. We perceived Mr. Hobhouse* tremble and shake as if the Judgment Day had arrived, when all the evil deeds of the Ministry were to be brought to light."

On August 28th the Whigs were beaten on the address by a majority of 91. On the 30th, Peel visited the Queen and began to form a Ministry.

**Sir Robert Peel again takes Office, 1841.**

It is no secret that Mr. Gladstone had hoped for the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland, a position of very great importance, but one for which he had at that time but few qualifications except courage. Peel had no intention of provoking the Irish Nationalists unnecessarily, and he had marked out Mr. Gladstone for the great work of tariff reform. So Ireland went to Eliot, and Mr. Gladstone had to content himself with the Vice-Presidency of the Board of Trade, with the additional post of Master of the Mint and a seat on the Privy Council. "Gladstone's appointment to the Board of Trade," wrote Monckton Milnes to Guizot on September 7th, "is not very distinguished in itself, but at the present moment, when the Corn Law fills up so large a place in public and party interests, it has acquired a great importance, and will give him great and frequent means of displaying his fine abilities."† In truth the appointment gave Mr. Gladstone the very best possible opening. He set to work at once with the utmost energy, and soon won golden opinions from the members of the permanent staff. The very incompetence of his chief proved a positive advantage, for it made Mr. Gladstone in a few weeks the real though not the nominal head of the Department.

**Mr. Gladstone at the Board of Trade.**

"I remember," said Mr. Gladstone in 1894, "when I was appointed to Lord Ripon's department, I felt appalled at the mysteries and difficulties which, I assumed, pertained to it. 'Oh,' they said to me, 'in a month

* Thomas Benjamin Hobhouse, the Whig candidate. He polled only 394 votes as against 630 which were recorded for Lord John Manners and 633 for Mr. Gladstone.

† Guizot, who was at this time Prime Minister of France, had in the previous year entertained Mr. Gladstone and John Stuart Mill. They had not met before. So Guizot had the distinction of introducing the great political financier to the great political economist. *Cf.* "Memories of Old Friends," Caroline Fox, p. 315.

Ripon will have shown you everything.' But at the end of the month I found I knew more about the business even than Lord Ripon."*

But the situation in Parliament demands attention. The Whigs had small hopes of a majority when they appealed to the country; but their smallest were less than realised. The first division that took place

VIEW IN WHITEHALL SHOWING (ON THE LEFT) THE OFFICES OCCUPIED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE CIRCA 1840.

*(From the Crace Collection, British Museum.)*

in the Commons gave Peel, as we have seen, a majority of 91. The result was not due to any violent Tory reaction, but rather to a revival of Conservative feeling. The Whigs had become more and more unpopular, and they richly deserved their fate. Miserable and humiliating had been the tenacity with which they clung to office, and still more so the position in which they had placed the throne by their half-successful attempt "to make the Queen the ostensible head of their party," and "to identify her with them

**The Parliamentary Situation, 1841.**

* *Daily News*, April 6th, 1894.

and with their measures." So says Greville; and his criticisms upon the Melbourne Government are not more just than his appreciation of the new Prime Minister. "All Peel's conduct for some time past," he says on August 10th, "his speeches in and out of the House of Commons upon all occasions, indicate his resolution to act upon liberal and popular principles, and upon them to govern, or not at all." And on September 1st, while Sir Robert Peel's Administration was being composed, Greville reverts to the same theme :—

**Greville on Peel.**

"It is impossible for Peel to have begun more auspiciously than he has done. I expected that he would act with vigour and decision, and he has not disappointed my anticipations. Those liberal views, which terrified and exasperated High Tories, High Churchmen, and bigots of various persuasion; those expressed or supposed opinions and intentions which elicited the invectives of the British critic, or the impertinences of 'Catholicus,' were to me a satisfactory earnest that, whenever he might arrive at the height of power, he was resolved to stretch his wings out and to fly in the right direction. He must be too sagacious a man not to see what are the only principles on which this country can or ought to be governed, and that inasmuch as he is wiser, better informed and more advanced in practical knowledge than the mass of his supporters, it is absolutely necessary for him *immediately to assume that predominance over them and to determine their political allegiances to him*, without establishing which would be one of incessant shifts and expedients insincere, ineffective, and in the end abortive."*

It is interesting to find that so shrewd an observer as Greville, in the first triumphant moments of Peel's Ministry, and in the height of the Conservative reaction, should have laid this stress upon the Liberalism of Peel. The words in italics are especially remarkable. Peel certainly did what was "absolutely necessary;" and the way in which the Peelite party hung together after his death is a proof of the almost indelible character of the political impressions which his individuality stamped upon the younger and abler men in his Administration.

The Whigs were astounded at Peel's strength and dejected by an overthrow which seemed almost irretrievable. "Peel bestrides the world like a Colossus," wrote Campbell, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, in September, "and we are only looking out for dishonourable graves. At Brooks's 'hope ne'er comes that comes to all.' *Lasciate ogni speranza voi che qui entrate.* The universal opinion is that the game is irrevocably up, and that the Tory party will be in power for fifty years to come. Most of our men are gone to Scotland to shoot, or are flying abroad. The few who remain in London say there is no use in attending either House."

The Board of Trade at the time Mr. Gladstone became Vice-President was already among the less unenlightened of the State Departments. Porter, Deacon Hume and MacGregor had all in their different ways contributed to its general efficiency and reputation. Porter was an excellent statistician, though a poor administrator. Deacon Hume's reputation stood very high. MacGregor was too noisy and self-advertising. He claimed so much credit that he got less than he deserved. On the whole, the tradition of the permanent staff was Liberal and Free Trade; so much so that Lord Ripon contemplated the removal of MacGregor for the notorious thoroughness

**Efficiency of the Board of Trade.**

* Greville Memoirs: 2nd series, vol. ii., pp. 34—35.

of his doctrines. Very shortly after taking office, he informed MacGregor that he could have no confidence in him. This was repeated, but "MacGregor responded that he should once for all make known to his lordship that he had no intention of resigning, that he would give his best assistance to him as President of the Board of Trade without reference to political considerations, and that if he chose to turn him out in consequence of the evidence he had given before the committee of the House of Commons,* he was of course at liberty to do so."† Ripon was silenced. He may have had a faint inkling that he would not be backed by Peel; so this feeble effort to initiate the spoils system in England was happily frustrated. In truth Sir Robert Peel had sent for Mr. Gladstone to tell him that he and not Lord Ripon would be the real supervisor and director of the operations of the Board of Trade. Even a competent President could hardly have played a conspicuous or useful part in the House of Lords; and it is not surprising that Mr. Gladstone's financial genius should almost at once have asserted its natural superiority. He had had no special training; for the mathematical course at Oxford could not be so regarded. Mr. Gladstone has himself told how it became necessary then "for the first time in my life to turn my mind to questions connected with the economical system, and the fiscal and commercial legislation, of this country. The result of that application was at once to determine and break up any traditional and party regard which I might previously have had for a Protective system. And from the year 1842, not always in a conspicuous position, but, I trust, with consistency and certainly with a sincere purpose of heart, I laboured to prosecute that great work in which Sir Robert Peel had achieved so much more conspicuous a place."‡ It is no wonder that this unique experience turned Mr. Gladstone into a Free Trader. All the petitions from Protected interests found their way to him; and it was obvious that the miserable failure of these trades was due to the patronage of the law. Enterprise and Protection could not co-exist. Mr. Gladstone soon became complete master of his subject. He went into details which Peel had no time to consider, and probably received the most splendidly perfect training which could possibly have been devised for a future Chancellor of the Exchequer.

**Mr. Gladstone the Real Head of the Department.**

Rightly to divide the credit for good work between a leader and his lieutenant is always difficult. In this case Peel was the motive power, and to him belongs the praise due to the innovator. It was essential that

* This was the Select Committee on Import Duties. Its report (July, 1840) was a severe blow to Protection; and MacGregor's able evidence formed a very important feature.

† Greville Memoirs, November 19th, 1841. Lord Ripon's attitude is the more strange seeing that he was one of the Whig seceders to Peel's Cabinet—Graham and Stanley being the other two. A rumour of the differences between MacGregor and Lord Ripon must have got about two months earlier; for on September 16th Mr. Gladstone was asked whether a return which had been prepared by Mr. MacGregor on the Commercial Tariffs of Foreign Countries would be issued. Mr. Gladstone gave an official answer. Lord Ripon, he said, "entirely approved" of the return. Parts I.—V. of the return appeared at the public expense in the autumn of 1842.

‡ Speech at Manchester, April 24th, 1862, quoted in Mr. H. J. Leech's "The Life of Mr. Gladstone told by Himself."

the reform of the tariff should begin on a large scale—with a comprehensive measure. Peel saw this; but the difficulties were endless. Old officials still remember the intolerable interferences with trade, the petitions that came from merchants, the wire-pulling of the rival interests, the endless litigation that arose from the intricacies and absurdities of the Customs. Mr. Gladstone was the very man to disentangle such a web. Vast industry would have been useless without ingenuity to match. And this ingenuity, which he had practised in the subtleties of theology and the technicalities of procedure, Mr. Gladstone was now to apply to commercial statistics and Customs law. The task was enormously severe. Mr. Gladstone often said that his first revision of the tariff was more arduous and difficult than all the others put together. Peel soon found out his follower's extraordinary talents, and is said to have pointed him out as the future Prime Minister. Mr. Gladstone was fortunate in securing the services of an able private secretary in Mr. Rawson,* one of his contemporaries at Eton, who had by this time been twelve years at the Board of Trade, was now second to Porter in the recently created Statistical Department, and had already acted as private secretary to two Presidents of the Board. His old colleague—though his official connection with Mr. Gladstone only lasted for nine months—still has a lively recollection of the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, of the modesty, not to say humility, which marked his dealings with seniors and superiors, the confidence, consideration, and generosity with which he treated the subordinates in whom he trusted. Mr. Gladstone had to stand the fire of the Protected interests, which took alarm almost the moment Peel came into power; and his secretary would often be called on to write a score or two of letters a day, Mr. Gladstone indicating the drift of the replies in the most important cases only. This is the true starting-point of Mr. Gladstone's official career. The Tory free-lance was developing into the reforming statesman. He was beginning to inspire as well as to place confidence in others.

**Peel and Gladstone.**

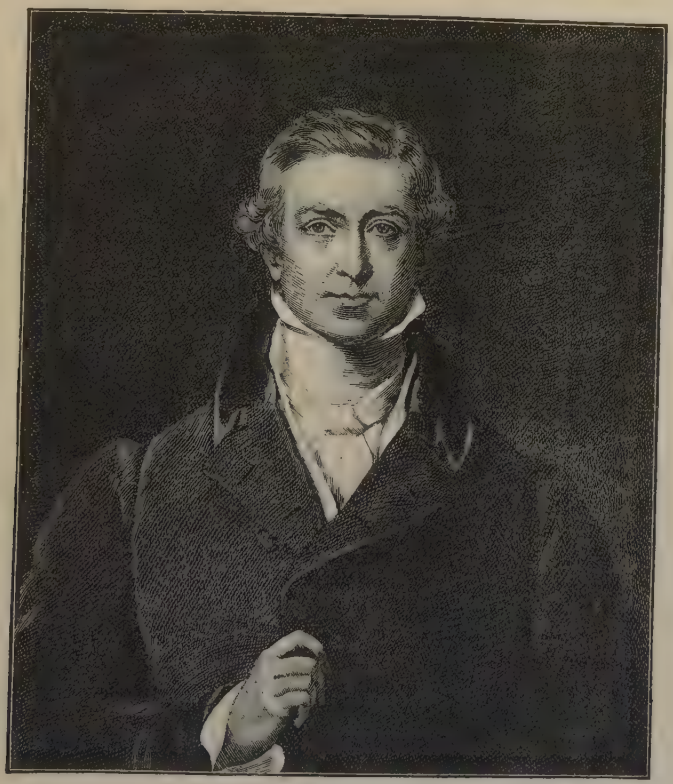
**An Old Secretary's Recollections.**

But though intent on mastering the details of his new work, Mr. Gladstone did not lose his interest in ecclesiastical policy. Bishops were constant visitors at the Board of Trade. There was a pigeon hole for Tract 90 in Mr. Gladstone's mind if not in his office. A harassed clergyman had a better chance with the Vice-President than a harassed interest. Early in the session a scheme of Prussian origin, negotiated between Bunsen and Archbishop Howley, for the establishment of a Bishopric at Jerusalem was made public. A permissive Act, called the "Jerusalem Bishopric Act," was hastily passed through Parliament, and received the Royal Assent on the 5th of October. On October 16th, 1841, the Earl of Shaftesbury recorded in his diary a dinner with Bunsen to celebrate the King of Prussia's birthday, at which "Gladstone, McCaul and my brother William were present." There was much at the moment to rejoice the good Earl's Evangelical heart. News had arrived that the Sultan had given leave to build the church at Jerusalem, and that the patriarch of Antioch had solicited aid against Popery. Shaftesbury was

**A Dinner with Bunsen.**

* Afterwards Sir Rawson W. Rawson.

disposed to have hopes of even an extreme High Churchman: "Gladstone stripped himself of a part of his Puseyite garments, spoke like a pious man, rejoiced in the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and proposed the health of Alexander. This is delightful: for he is a good man, and a clever man, and an industrious man." Baron Bunsen described Mr. Gladstone's flow of conversation at this banquet, as "a gentle and translucent stream." "We drove back to town in the clearest starlight; Gladstone continuing with



SIR ROBERT PEEL.

(*From an Engraving after the Painting by J. Wood, published* 1842.)

unabated animation to pour forth his harmonious thoughts in melodious tone." But the Bishopric was still troubling Mr. Gladstone on November the 6th; for he writes on that date to his friend James Hope: "Amidst public business quite sufficient for a man of my compass, I have during the whole of the week perforce been carrying on with the Bishop of London and with Bunsen a correspondence on, and inquisition into, the Jerusalem design, until I almost reel and stagger under it." On the 8th of November a certain Dr. Alexander was consecrated "Bishop of the United Church of England and Ireland in Jerusalem." The object was explained in the *Prussian State Gazette*. The Bishop was to be nominated alternately by

the Crowns of Great Britain and Prussia; he was to shepherd a Protestant flock.

In the summer of 1842 Mr. Gladstone lost his private secretary, who had been appointed by Stanley—at Mr. Gladstone's recommendation—secretary to the Governor-General of Canada. A successor was therefore wanted; and Mr. Rawson, on being consulted, suggested that it would be wise to infuse new blood instead of selecting a clerk from the department. Mr. Gladstone agreed; and Mr. Rawson went down to Eton to pay a visit to his old tutor Coleridge. The story is told briefly by Northcote:—

Stafford Northcote (1842).

"Rawson, who was my tutor's pupil and late secretary to Gladstone, has been appointed to a place of £1,500 per annum in Canada. He is a great favourite of Gladstone's, who, both through him and through Lord Lyttelton (Gladstone's brother-in-law), applied to my tutor to know whether he could recommend a successor."*

Coleridge suggested three Etonians—Farrer,† Northcote, and Pocock. The choice really lay between the first two, who were bosom friends and shortly afterwards brothers-in-law; and they were themselves consulted about it. Northcote's position and personal tastes were both in favour of a political career, while Farrer had no turn for it; and accordingly the secretaryship fell to Northcote. Mr. Gladstone had pointed out to Coleridge in a letter that the work was hard and the pay scanty. But Northcote, to judge from his letters, was delighted at the prospect. Thus he writes to his father:—

"The duties of the situation are principally to open all letters addressed to Mr. Gladstone, to make notes of their contents and submit them to him, and after receiving his instructions to write answers to them; but he requires a person who will be ready to go along with him in all things, and whom he may treat quite confidentially. The requisites, as my tutor [Coleridge] expresses them, are chiefly 'modesty, quickness, readiness to oblige, and a ready pen.' . . . From what I know of Gladstone's character there is no single statesman of the present day to whom I would more gladly attach myself; and I should think from the talents he has shown for business since he came into office, there is no one more likely to retain his position unless some *revolution* takes place."‡

This on June 21st, and on June 30th he writes in even more enthusiastic terms to Shirley after accepting the secretaryship. He speaks of Mr. Gladstone, with whom he sympathised very strongly also on Church matters, as—

"the man of all others among the statesmen of the present day to whom I should desire to attach myself. . . . My prospects will, of course, depend upon Mr. Gladstone's own success, of which, unless there is a regular *bouleversement*, I have not the slightest doubt. . . . A seat in Parliament will probably be considered by-and-by desirable, and any good offices that he can do me I have reason to believe that he will. . . . With any other man than Gladstone I might have hesitated longer. But he is one whom I respect beyond measure; he stands almost alone as representative of principles with which I cordially agree; and as a man of business and one who, humanly speaking, is sure to rise, he is pre-eminent."

In the winter of 1841-2 Mr. Gladstone was giving assistance to Manning, who had taken in hand the amendment of the Poor Law, and especially

* Life of Lord Iddesleigh by Mr. Andrew Lang, vol. i., p. 54.
† Afterwards Lord Farrer. ‡ Ibid., vol. i. pp. 63-67.

of the provisions relating to bastardy clauses; and was engaged in a correspondence with Cornewall Lewis, then a Commissioner, and with Sir James Graham. Mr. Gladstone did not at this time put much faith in the improvement of morals by legislation, but was "disposed to believe that only with a revived and improved discipline of the Church can we hope for any generally effective check upon lawless lust." For this purpose he suggested the use of the Confessional.

On February 8th, 1842, Mr. Gladstone begins his career of political finance by proposing a series of resolutions for the abolition and reduction of the duties levied in our Colonies upon the products of foreign countries. It was the revival of an unsuccessful scheme which had been brought forward in the previous year by the Whig Government. Mr. Gladstone aimed not only at a relaxation of the "system of severe taxation, and almost of prohibition," which prevailed in our Western Colonies, but also at legislative and administrative simplification. Previous laws were to be repealed; a single and consolidated Act was to be substituted. The absurd and wasteful anomaly of a duplicate system of Custom-houses was at last to be abolished: "It was the intention of the Board of Trade to call the attention of the other Departments of the Government . . . to the anomaly of having two sets of Custom-house officers in those Colonies, to the waste of public money arising from the system, and to the necessity for an arrangement, with a view to the consolidation of the establishment and the consequent saving of expense." The contrast between the trifling differential duties levied upon foreign produce in our Eastern Colonial possessions and the heavy and often prohibitive rates inflicted in Canada and the West Indies ought obviously to be done away with. On the other hand, Mr Gladstone had not quite released himself from the fetters and fallacies of patriotic Mercantilism. "The principal *exemption* he proposed to remove," he explained, "was the exemption from duty of corn, wheat, and flour on their importation into the Canadas. He believed it was in conformity with the desire of the people of Canada that some tax of a moderate description should be imposed on the importation into that Colony of American corn and flour. He believed that on the American side of the border, a very considerable import tax, amounting to nearly ten shillings per quarter, was levied on the produce of Canada entering the United States. Of course, he did not intend to impose any such rate of duty—the duty he meant to propose would be three shillings per quarter. The ground on which he thought provisions coming into Canada from the United States should be subject to a duty imposed by the authority of the Imperial Parliament was, in fact, that Canada sent to this country considerable quantities of grain and flour; and he was happy to say Canada showed indications of sending over still greater quantities, so soon as her natural capabilities were developed by the fostering influence of peace and of wise local legislation. On this account the only articles to which he meant to apply the duties were those he had mentioned. The theory of the law was to afford an advantage to Canadian produce on being sent to the British market; and it seemed to him desirable that when this country sent forth thousands of Englishmen to North America as emigrants, the Imperial Legislature ought not to allow those

**Colonial Duties on Foreign Imports, 1842.**

who emigrated to, and became citizens of, the United States to put themselves into possession of a privilege intended only for British subjects —a privilege the American settlers could now acquire by sending their produce and provisions through Canada to this country." *

Against this provision Labouchere very properly protested; but it was the only one which could excite unfavourable criticism. Taking the plan as a whole, we may admit the justice of Mr. Gladstone's claim that it "afforded an opportunity, with practical convenience, of giving more full and striking application to a principle which they had long adopted—that of rendering to their Colonial fellow-subjects another of those acts of goodwill to which alone they believed they were to look for cementing the connection between the Colonies and the mother country."

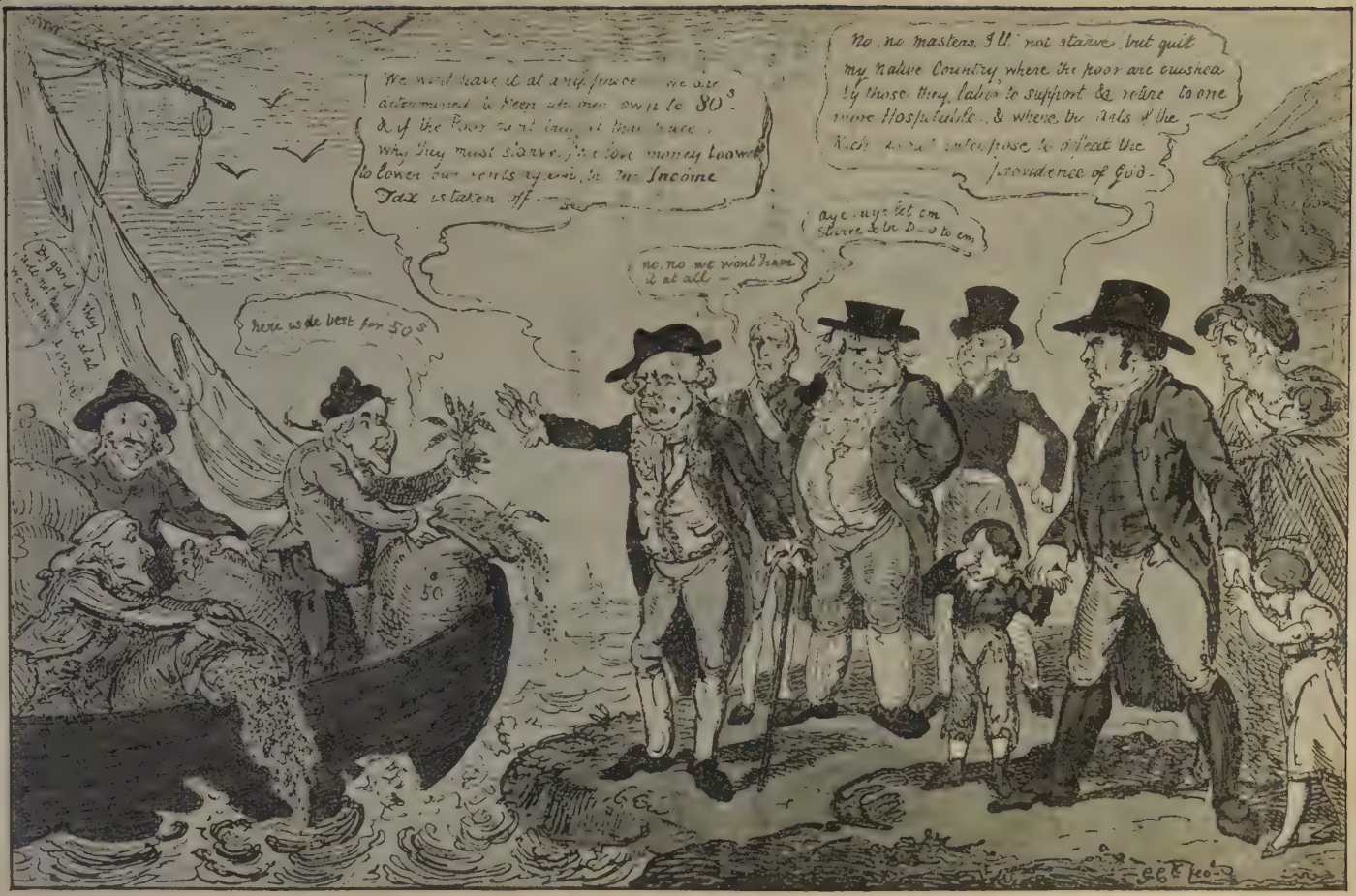
A speech expounding the intricacies of Colonial Customs and explaining the means of simplification was not a sufficient exercise for Mr. Gladstone's energies. On the very same night he rose to ask leave to bring in a Bill for the better regulation of railroads. Here too his mastery of the details of the subject is very remarkable. A good part of his speech was devoted to deprecating the opposition of Colonel Sibthorp, who, as he said himself, had been "conscientiously opposed to the introduction of all railroads." Some of the proposals in Mr. Gladstone's Bill were, however, so obviously for the public safety that the gallant colonel was considerably mollified. † Mr. Gladstone's wisdom and foresight may be illustrated by two short passages. The first relates to level crossings: he proposed "that in cases where roads crossed the railroad on the line, the gates should be closed across the roads, and not across the railroads. In most of the railway Acts it was directed that the gates should be not across the road but across the railroad; but experience had proved that this was not the best course; he therefore proposed a clause which would lead to the opposite practice." The second is also a provision for the public safety: "It happened in certain instances that cuttings were found too steep, and embankments too narrow, for security, either ordinarily or from bad weather. In such cases the companies should be empowered to take land enough to widen the embankment and diminish the slope sufficiently to make it secure."

**Railway Regulation.**

Mr. Gladstone's railway policy proves that he was not a fanatical Free Trader. He did not insist upon the value of competitive companies in a service whose conditions preclude effective competition. Fortunately or unfortunately, the idea of State management had never entered into the head of any practical person. Mr. Gladstone accordingly advocated, as most beneficial to the public, large (and therefore rich) monopolies under State control.

* It would appear, however, from an answer given by Mr. Gladstone on February 14th to a question of Labouchere's, that he was not enamoured of "the theory of the law." He would not express his own opinion or state whether the Government were "irrevocably determined" to stand by it.

† He was glad that the measure was placed in such able hands, though, if accidents should, after all, increase, "he could have wished that his hon. friend had introduced a Bill for the annihilation of railways."


We must have it at a reasonable price — we are determined to keep the money in our own pockets to 80s & if the Poor can't live at that price, Why they must starve. For how can money be lower to lower our rents agreeable to our Income Tax is taken off —
No, no masters, I'll not starve, but quit my Native Country where the poor are crushed by those they labor to support & retire to one more Hospitable, & where the Arts & the Rich dare not attempt to thwart the providence of God.
aye, aye: let em starve & be D—d to em
no, no we wont have it at all —
here we do best for 50s —
50

"THE BLESSINGS OF PEACE, OR THE CURSE OF THE CORN BILL."

Representing the Refusal of Foreign Corn.

(*From the Coloured Etching by George Cruikshank.*)

The Ministerial plan for a modification of the Corn Laws by a rearrangement of the sliding scale, with a view to maintaining an average price of fifty-six shillings a quarter, was explained by Sir Robert Peel on the following day (February 9th). * On the 14th, Lord John Russell replied in a hesitating speech, the only satisfactory feature of which was his refutation of the principle advocated by Malthus and laid down by Peel, "that you ought to make this country independent of foreign nations" for its food supply. "I confess," said the Whig leader, "that, although that principle might be an excellent one for some remote and sequestered State—such as that city which is supposed to exist somewhere in Mexico, which is said to have no communication with the rest of mankind—I cannot conceive how it is applicable to this great commercial country."

The Corn Laws, 1842.

Mr. Gladstone replied in a speech to which Hansard has devoted thirty pages, and which at once proves and justifies the fact that Peel already regarded him as his first lieutenant in commercial legislation and as practically, though not yet in form, a member of the Cabinet. He supported the "principles" of Peel and Malthus by the authority of Huskisson, and contrasted Lord John Russell's view that it would be disgraceful for the Legislature to destroy a tariff upon faith in which an enormous capital had been invested, with "the clamour" of the Leaguers, who had contended at a recent conference that "the free importation of corn was not a subject for the deliberation of the Senate, but a natural and inalienable law of the Creator." Mr. Gladstone, however, did not commit himself to anything like dogmatic optimism with regard to the Protection of agriculture:—

"He, at all events, was of opinion that either a graduated scale, or a fixed duty, or a perfectly free trade in corn was open to serious objections; and what lay before them was a choice of difficulties, and a choice of evils, of which it was their duty to choose the least. He was ready to admit that the present law had not operated in the way in which it was thought it would operate, but that it had pressed with very considerable severity on the consumer, with a severity which the experience of recent years could alone convince its authors that it was calculated to act. But let them consider with fairness the charges which were made against the present law, and the degree in which it was fairly open to them. There had gone forth a denunciation—and he believed some honourable members in that House would be found among the supporters of the doctrine—against the present system of Corn Laws as the main source of the existing distresses of the country. Now it was wonderful and almost incredible that dispassionate and able minds, that men of searching and acute understanding, should attribute to the Corn Laws evils which were evidently traceable, not to human causes, but to those dispensations of Providence which ordained the hazards of a periodical defalcation in the food of man."

When Mr. Gladstone at length sat down, amid "loud cheers, in which both sides of the House cordially joined," † the general impression given by the speech was not very unfairly represented by Charles Wood (afterwards Lord Halifax), who remarked that he had given "indisputable

* It is enough to give the superior and inferior limits of the duty. When the price of corn in the British market was under fifty-one shillings a quarter, the duty was to be twenty shillings; when the price rose to seventy-five shillings, the duty was to disappear.

† Hansard, 3rd series, vol. lx., p. 385.

proof that the measure now proposed would give no satisfaction to anyone."* There is an apologetic tone about the whole speech.

In politics, especially in English politics, a Minister cannot afford to be logical. And in 1842 Peel needed all his courage and persuasiveness for his great Budget. He made his financial statement on March 11th. The estimated deficiency for the year was more than two and a half millions. He proposed to increase it to £3,780,000 by reducing, and in some cases abolishing, the duties upon 750 of the 1,200 articles still remaining on the tariff. The whole deficiency was to be covered and the national economy established on a sound basis by the imposition of an income tax of three per cent. The Minister was determined that under his rule the nation should be solvent. The leader of the Opposition should never have the luxury of retorting upon its author that famous description of Baring "seated on an empty chest, by the pool of bottomless deficiency, fishing for a Budget." We have no conception now of the strength of the feeling which Peel had determined to overcome. The income tax was regarded as a terrible impost, which could only be justified by the exigencies of a huge war. In 1802 Burdett had said: "The income tax has created an inquisitorial power of the most partial, offensive and cruel nature. The whole transactions of a life may be inquired into, family affairs laid open, and an Englishman, like a culprit, summoned to attend commissioners, compelled to wait, like a lacquey in their ante-chamber, from day to day until they are ready to institute their inquisition into his property." And on April 8th, 1842, Sheil, after quoting this with approval, expressed in brilliant and powerful language not only his indignation at the tax, but his surprise that even Peel should have been able to force it down the throats of his party: "To create an additional deficiency in order to repair it by an income tax, to inflict a new wound in order to apply a favourite cure, is more than tentative, and if my right honourable friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer [Baring] had made a proposition like this, he would have been regarded as an empiric of the most adventurous kind. But it is the good fortune of the right honourable baronet that his supporters entertain in his regard that sort of confidence which Waller has happily described in his celebrated address to a great projector:—

**The Income Tax imposed, 1842.**

> 'Still as you rise, the State, exalted too,
> Feels no disorder when 'tis changed by you.'"†

Especially brilliant was Sheil's contrast of the Premier's speech on the income tax with that which he delivered a few weeks earlier on the motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws. "The distresses of the country were then, forsooth, transitory and evanescent;" but now when an income tax was to be imposed, the difficulties and dangers of the country became of the most appalling character. "If, Sir, at the close of that speech, someone who had lived in sequestration from the world, and for the last five or six years

* The amendment, however, was negatived by a majority of 123.

† How aptly the couplet describes the extraordinary quality by which Gladstone, even more than Peel, was able to effect legal revolutions in the most conservative country in the world! "A great projector" is evidently a reporter's blunder for "the Lord Protector." And "Feels no disorder when" should read, "Finds no distemper while."

had not heard of the events which have passed within that period, had chanced to have entered this House, he would, I think, have been tempted to exclaim—appalled by the right honourable baronet's magnificent peroration: 'Good God! what has happened? Is England brought to the verge of ruin? Has one greater than Napoleon—of whom Napoleon was but the precursor—appeared? Is the world in arms against England? Have her fleets been sunk in the ocean, and, with Wellington at their head, have those legions that were once deemed invincible at last given way?'"

**The Tariff.**

To return to the tariff: Sir Robert Peel announced that the imposition of the income tax would enable him to convert the deficiency into a surplus of more than a million. And this surplus he proposed to apply in the remission of those taxes which were most unfavourable to trade. The revision of the tariff was carried out in accordance with six general rules:—

1. The removal of prohibitions and of virtually prohibitory duties.
2. The reduction of duties on raw materials to a 5 per cent. maximum.
3. The reduction of duties on semi-manufactured articles to a 10 or 12½ per cent. maximum.
4. The reduction of duties on fully manufactured articles to a 20 per cent. maximum.
5. The introduction of special and additional remissions of duties to favour Colonial products.
6. The abolition of export duties on manufactures.

The loss of revenue which would result was calculated as follows:—

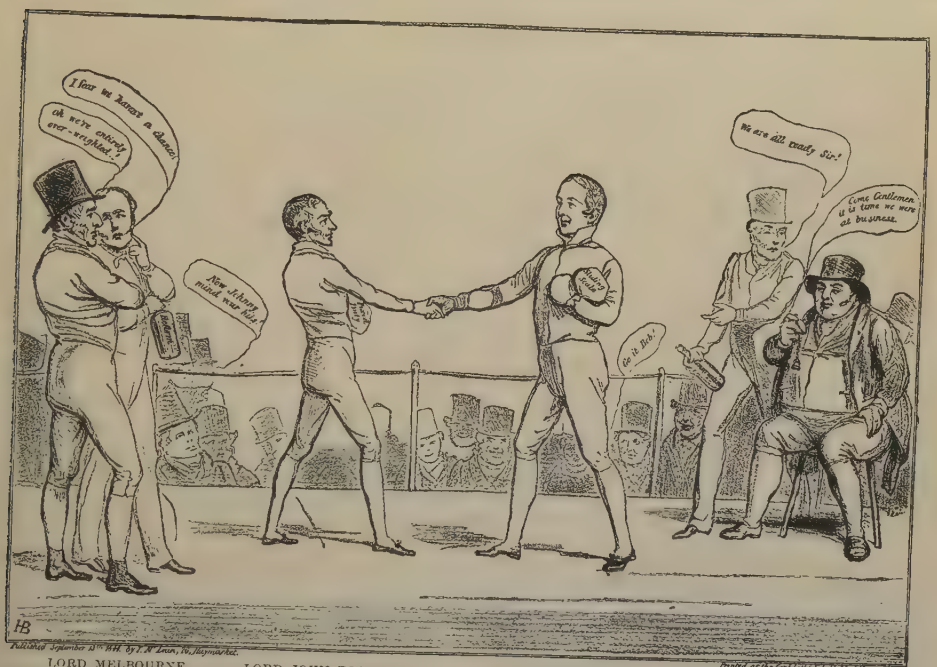
| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Reduction of timber duties ... ... ... ... | £600,000 |
| 2. ,, ,, coffee ,, ... ... ... ... ... | £170,000 |
| 3. A vast number of smaller deductions ... ... ... | £270,000 |
| 4. The abolition of the ½ per cent. export duty ... | £100,000 |
| Total | £1,140,000 |

But the relief to the consumer was very much greater than the loss to revenue. "We believe," wrote Mr. Gladstone at the end of the year, "that it might without over-statement be taken at two millions of money."* In lowering the duties upon all important articles, some counterpoise was to be found in the increase of consumption. "In reductions upon manufactured goods, we may often look for an increased revenue from the very same nominal diminution of duty which opens new competition in the article, and thereby cheapens it to the consumer. In the removal of absolute prohibitions, and by bringing down prohibitory duties to an amount which will render a trade in them possible, new revenues are created which before were unheard of."

Perhaps the most severe criticism that can be passed on the first great tariff reform is this: that the principle followed in dealing with hundreds of contemptible items which produced practically no revenue was diminution instead of abolition. "As far as raw materials are concerned," said Mr. Gladstone in the article just referred to, "most of the late reductions, such as those on turpentine, tar, indigo, cork, wood, and many other articles, have been so sweeping that the revenue upon them is virtually surrendered." Exactly; but why continue that vexatious ceremonial with the Customs

* *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review*, January, 1843, p. 255.

officials which makes no inconsiderable addition to the price of goods? The question was answered in magnificent fashion three years later. It will be seen that the greatest sacrifice in revenue was entailed by the remission of the timber tax; and Sir Robert Peel was severely criticised for his imprudence. Mr. Gladstone's defence of his chief is vigorous and convincing. "Let any man," said he, "read the *dicta* of Mr. Deacon Hume; let any man read the chapter of Sir H. Parnell* on the taxation of raw materials; let any man remember that timber is the one raw material of universal necessity which we do not possess in abundance; that we have clay, lime,


I fear we have a dance
Oh we're entirely ever-ready!
New Liberty mind your Eye!
Go in Bob!
We are all ready Sir!
Come Gentlemen it is time we were at business
HB
Published September 30th 1841 by T. McLean, 26, Haymarket.
Printed at the Caricature Office 191 Piccadilly

LORD MELBOURNE. LORD JOHN RUSSELL. SIR ROBERT PEEL. DUKE OF WELLINGTON.
LORD PALMERSTON. JOHN BULL.

THE CORN LAW FIGHT: SLIDING SCALE *VERSUS* FIXED DUTY.

*From the "H. B." (John Doyle) Cartoon published in* 1841.

coal, iron, copper, tin, lead, but that we want timber; that on this article, this requisite for houses, for farms, for ships, for factories, in a word for all the purposes of industry and construction, we had imposed a tax of more than one hundred per cent. upon the value which it bore in bond; and that the politicians who pride themselves on their familiarity with economical laws accused the Minister of lavish waste of the public means when he repealed about half the obnoxious tax! Suppose we had been a coal-importing country; suppose we had wanted iron suitable for ordinary purposes, and any man had proposed to-day on the importation of them

* Peel acknowledged that his new fiscal policy was inspired by Parnell's book "On Financial Reform." It is worth remembering that before his tragic death (June 8th, 1842) Parnell had twice supported Villiers's annual motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws.

a tax of one-fourth, aye, or of one-tenth of that amount, no Minister, whatever his talents, whatever his majority, could have had the smallest hope of success in carrying such a tax."

But Mr. Gladstone had not yet done with the objectors, and one passage of his speech gives us a peep behind the old commercial barriers which had been erected by the commercial and legislative genius of the landed gentry. "The old system of the timber duties," he declared, "had in it everything that could render it noxious and improvident in its bearings upon natural wealth. It involved: 1. An enormous burden upon a raw material of the very first necessity. 2. A differential duty upon Colonial as compared with British timber. 3. A further and high differential duty upon foreign wood as compared with both. 4. An arbitrary distribution of the tax in detail, so complex that it became the work of years accurately to comprehend all the mysterious bearings and workings of the scale, and laid in a manner so unequally affecting different dimensions of wood, that the producers were forced to cut down their trees, not according to the manner in which Providence has ordained that they should grow, but according to the very different manner in which they could most alleviate the crushing weight of our duties, and that the law was actually, as regarded many descriptions of wood, for us a prohibitory law. 5. It involved the gross and, to our artisans, the very cruel absurdity, that while we exacted a duty of 100 per cent. upon the raw material of their industry, we admitted any fully-manufactured article made of that same raw material from abroad at the charge of only 20 per cent. upon its value!"

Political Economy (1842).

The generally accepted view that Mr. Gladstone had never studied the theory of Political Economy certainly needs modification, in view of an argument which the Vice-President of the Board of Trade introduced into his speech of March 9th in this year (1842), on the second reading of the Corn Laws Importation Bill: "Is it possible," he asks, in the course of an attempt to combat the argument that the Corn Laws diminished the demand for labour, "any man can doubt that a repeal of the Corn Laws would at once displace a vast mass of agricultural labour? This has been to a great extent treated as a landlord's question, but I will contend that for the present generation, at least, it is more of a labourer's question. What is the rent which is said to be augmented by these laws? Now the most approved authorities in Political Economy have defined rent as the surplus produce the land yields after the cost of cultivation and the maintenance of the cultivator. This being so, and considering the many classes of land in cultivation, it is further taught by these writers that the lowest class yields no rent, or, at least, that the returns are exceedingly small, and may be put out of account. If you raise the price of agricultural produce in any country you will bring a much wider extent of land into cultivation, and therefore the poorer soils would be tilled, and if the poorer soils in our country be cultivated through the rise of the price of agricultural produce, it follows that if you diminish prices, so as to limit production, the effect must be to throw the poorer soils out of cultivation. This might diminish rents, but in the present extent of cultivation it is clear that if you reduce

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rents, it must be by throwing certain lands out of cultivation, and you must therefore at the same time throw out of employment a great body of labourers." Bimetallists used to complain that Mr. Gladstone did not read their prophets in his old age: landlords could not object that he did not read Ricardo in his youth.

It would be impossible to give in a short space any adequate notion of all the topics which Mr. Gladstone found occasion to discuss in this busy session. In a single week of April (1842) he made five speeches on the Colonial Customs duties. But from these expansive though commercial topics Mr. Gladstone's energy was to be diverted in May and June into smaller channels. On the 10th of May Sir Robert Peel explained the principles upon which he intended to proceed in the reform of the tariff. Labouchere followed feebly, endeavouring to twit the Government with a desertion to the very principles for which they had turned the Whig Government out of office. Disraeli made an elaborate speech in which he showed that Free Trade was the traditional policy of the Tory party. The doctrines of Free Trade were not a modern invention; "it was Mr. Pitt who first promulgated them in 1787." It is true that Disraeli thought that Free Trade was equivalent to "a system of complete reciprocity;" but that is only a small instance of Oriental carelessness. The point of interest is his complete approval of Free Trade, which he regards (May 10th, 1842) as not only a good thing, but a Tory thing. Mr. Gladstone ignored the speech, but took a similar line in his reply to Hume and Labouchere. He suggested, however, that it would be advisable to get to business, and he soon had plenty on his hands. On May 13th he was classifying braziletto wood, ebony, wrought copper, and pitch, in a peculiar category of the differential duties in favour of our Colonies. His defence of the differential system is ingenious, but need not detain us. Nor need we go into the details of the tariff. Cassava powder, bacon, onions, butter, cement, corks, and straw hats—on all of these and many other details Mr. Gladstone disserted. But one discussion, that upon fish, deserves to be noticed. Hitherto the aristocracy of this country, which had heaped up thousands of paltry duties upon almost every article of consumption, including fish, had specially exempted lobsters and turbot! Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone proposed uniformity in the fish tariff. They would have put a small duty on both lobsters and turbot. A storm of indignation greeted this proposal. The gentry were as virtuously angry over a prospective increase in the price of lobsters as they would have been over a prospective decrease in the price of bread. An alderman, a major, and a captain rose in quick succession. Sir Robert Peel tried to stem the municipal and military tide. "Our object," he said, "in proposing this duty is that if you look at the prohibition in fish, it will be found not to extend to those which are articles of luxury. It is urged against the law with respect to fish, that turbots and lobsters are excepted. We think it right not to except fish which is consumed by the upper classes. The duty is now laid on turbot for the first time, which surely it ought to be." Mr. Gladstone supported him. But a viscount added his weight to that of the alderman. Peel was cowed. The duty on lobsters was abandoned. Turbot remained. As to this, Alderman

**Taxing Lobsters and Turbot.**

Humphery "complained of the alteration in the tariff since its original proposal, whereby various descriptions of fish were required to be brought into our ports in other than fishing vessels; and especially in regard to turbot, which he said would be spoiled in the transportation from one vessel to another." Mr. Gladstone said that he could quiet the mind of the worthy alderman on the subject of turbot, about which he felt so natural an anxiety. It was not intended to make any change as to the mode of importation of turbot; and the object of the honourable member would be at once answered by placing turbot immediately after lobsters in the tariff.*

And so, after a few more acrimonious remarks from these Free Trade epicures, and another deprecatory speech from the Prime Minister, a debate ended whose subject had not been equalled in importance since the great Council in the reign of Domitian.

**Importation of Cattle (1842).**

On May 23rd Mr. Gladstone made a remarkable speech on the importation of live cattle, in which he gently ridiculed the timidity and extravagance of those gentlemen "who were the ornaments of what he might call the science of agriculture," but who, unfortunately for that science, "did not always cherish a sense of the benefits derived from the skill and enterprise applied to it, but were rather inclined to rely overmuch on the so-termed Protection of legislative enactments." One wild calculation upset another. There was one that the price of meat would immediately be reduced by twopence or threepence per pound. But he had also seen a statement in one of the newspapers in which it was "mathematically proved" that a hundred sows in three or five years would give birth to 232,000,000 pigs. We shall see that an effective quotation from this speech was made in the following year by Viscount Howick.

**Effects of the New Tariff.**

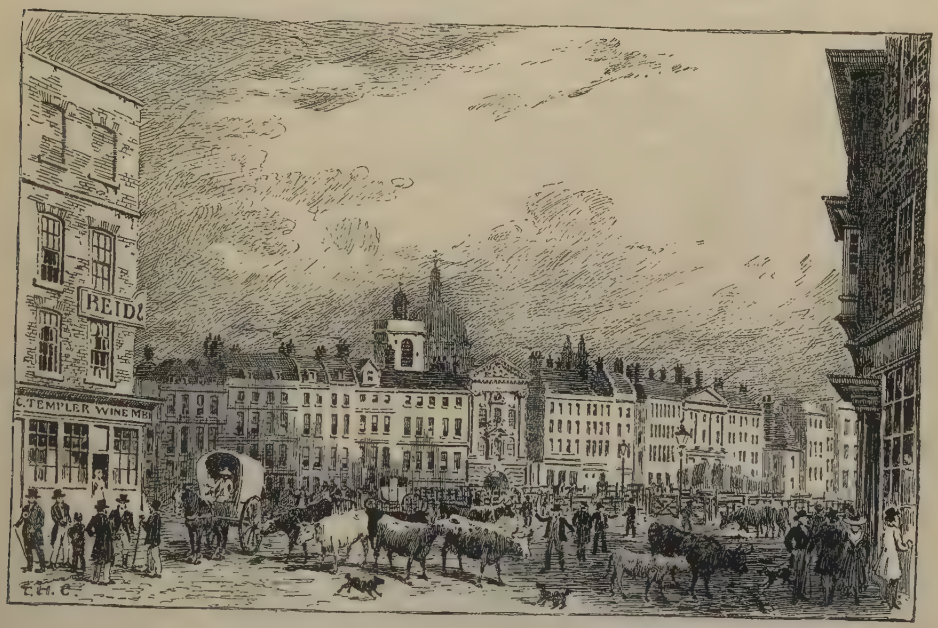
Loud were the groans and great the apprehensions of the landlords and butchers. Shortly after the tariff came into force a fall in the price of stock did take place; and many English and all Irish newspapers adopted such headings as, "The Effects of the New Tariff." Thus the *Times*, in its Smithfield Market report for December 5th, 1842:—

> "The effects of the new tariff are beginning to show themselves. Until to-day the foreign cattle imported into England have been entirely confined to the Continent; but now it will be found that the most distant shores have contributed to the market. . . . The official account, on which the duty has been paid for the week ending the 3rd inst., gives the following result:—Three cows from Rotterdam; one ditto from Quebec; one ditto from Montreal; one ditto from St. John's, New Brunswick; one bull from Calcutta, making a total of seven head. The number at market to-day was about five, all of which were of very bad quality, and commanded little or no attention."

Mr. Gladstone's comment is happy enough: "We are anxious to know who were the speculators of vast and comprehensive mind in Quebec, Montreal, and Calcutta, who determined to take the supply of this country with butchers' meat into their own hands, and shipped accordingly—one head apiece: We venture humbly to conjecture that each of those animals was a surplus remaining from the stores of the importing vessel, and was sold, naturally enough, not so much to relieve

* For this debate, see Hansard, May 24th, 1842.

the wants of this country, as to save the cost of feeding while the ship was in port." On December 12th, at the great Christmas market-day, 4,540 head of cattle appeared at Smithfield, but "not a single fresh head of stock was on offer from abroad; there being only a very rough Hamburg beast—received *viâ* Hull." And yet the new tariff was causing a depression in the price of stock. "Really," exclaims Mr. Gladstone, relaxing rather than abandoning his commercial gravity, "to assign to this minute and scarcely sensible addition from abroad the deadness of the market, reminds us of the injustice of the alderman who forgot the dainty turtle and punch, with the long train that follow them,




SMITHFIELD CATTLE MARKET IN THE 'THIRTIES.

(*From the Drawing by T. H. Shepherd.*)

and ascribed his gout to an unhappy mutton chop which he had been incautious enough to eat." *

But there is a certain political humour for the moderns in the contemplation of the anxiety of a Minister in 1842-3 to prove that his measures had not reduced the price of food. *He* was responsible to an aristocracy which kept cattle and a shopocracy which sold meat.

We return to the summer of 1842. On June 22nd Cobden wrote to his brother Frederick: "Peel is a Free-Trader, and so are Ripon and Gladstone. The last was put in by the Puseyites, who thought they had insinuated the wedge, but they now complain that he has been quite absorbed by Peel, which is the fact. Gladstone makes a very clever

* *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly*, January, 1843, pp. 268, 269.

*aide-de-camp* to Peel, but is nothing without him."* Everything that Cobden wrote is worth attention; but his want of sympathy with the Ministers, as well as with the official Opposition, prevented him from analysing their characters, their motives, their principles, and their relations to one another with his customary shrewdness. He was too anxious "to get away to Manchester" to understand Parliamentary conditions.

**Cobden on Gladstone.**

The session of 1842 ended as it had begun. From first to last Mr. Gladstone was occupied in answering small questions relating to the details of the tariff or in parrying the blows which the Whigs and the Free Traders were constantly aiming at the Government. He spoke more than one hundred times in the House on this his first tariff, which he afterwards said gave him more trouble than all the later ones put together.

Mention has already been made of Mr. Gladstone's friendship with Wordsworth. In the summer of 1842 the Minister was able to assist the poet in obtaining a well-deserved pension. "As I have already reached my seventy-third year," wrote the poet from Rydal, "there is not much time to lose, if I am thought worthy of being benefited." He left it to Mr. Gladstone's judgment how to proceed, "being fully assured that nothing will be done by you without the most delicate, well-weighed consideration of person and circumstances." But Peel procrastinated; an apparent promise was not fulfilled, and on October 13th Wordsworth again wrote: "If I should not succeed in obtaining what you have so kindly endeavoured to assist in procuring for me, I must be content; and should the pension come it would be welcome, both as a mark of public approbation, and preventing for the future the necessity of my looking more nearly to my expenditure than I have been accustomed to do. At all events, I shall ever retain a grateful and most pleasing remembrance of your exertions to serve me upon this occasion." Two days earlier, however, Mr. Gladstone had written "memoranda on Mr. Wordsworth's circumstances," and a Civil List pension of £300 a year was granted on the 15th October. Professor Knight† gives the credit for the grant entirely to Mr. Gladstone's efforts; as, indeed, did the poet himself, in a letter dated October 17th:— "I will not run the risk of offending you by a renewal of thanks for your good offices in bringing this about, but will content myself with breathing sincere and fervent good wishes for your welfare." A memorable and refreshing interlude in the hard and absorbing functions of a Finance Minister under Peel!

**Wordsworth's Pension.**

In the following month Mr. Gladstone began to put into shape the article, published anonymously in January, 1843, and already noticed on an earlier page, which exhibits more clearly than any of his speeches in Parliament the extraordinary progress of his mind in the year which had followed his admission to the Ministry of Peel. Peel is said to have vowed in 1842 that he would never make another speech against Free Trade. It is not too much to say that after a year's work at the Board of Trade Mr. Gladstone could not harbour another Protectionist thought. The article, entitled

**A Free-Trade Manifesto, 1843.**

* Morley's Life of Cobden, p. 242. † Knight's Wordsworth, vol. iii., pp. 426-430. See p. 288.

"The Course of Commercial Policy at Home and Abroad," made so great a stir at the time, and has since been so completely ignored, that it may fairly claim special attention. After bestowing much eulogy on Macgregor for the research work which he had undertaken in relation to foreign tariffs, Mr. Gladstone begins his argument by explaining how, after the war, we found ourselves "immediately and, as it were, organically dependent on our foreign trade; it was no longer an accident or an appendage, but it was a main artery of the system through which in great part buoyancy or depression affected our industrial life. A very high standard of material enjoyment [*sic*] had been established among the people: from which it is in the extreme difficult and painful to recede."

Hence it had become no matter of doctrinal optimism but one of plain utility, or rather iron necessity, "that we should more frankly enter into general competition in the markets of the world, and should consequently use every effort to cheapen production by relieving the materials of our industry, in their order of importance, from fiscal exactions, and by mitigating, with a just measure of regard to existing interests and to the virtual pledges which grow out of established laws, all partial burdens upon trade, by which the community as a whole is laid under contribution to support the particular pursuits of certain of the classes comprised within it. If we are to flourish and if we are to live, we must learn, one way or other, to compete with cheaper labour, with lighter taxes, with more fertile soils, with richer mines than our own; and if this is to be done, both the working hand and the material upon which it is to work must, as soon as practicable, be set free. Hence the reduction of duties on raw materials; and how unworthy would Sir Robert Peel have shown himself to have been the colleague of Mr. Huskisson in 1825, if in 1842 he had failed to discern the real exigencies of the country in its trading interests! Hence the reductions and the removals of prohibitions, affecting great articles of consumption, which, as we have stated, approximate more or less to the character of raw materials. Hence, also, the principle is established that foreign manufactures must be moderately taxed. First, because all our greater manufactures must be articles of export—on which, generally speaking, high duties at home would be unavailing. Secondly, because, as duties are reduced progressively in materials and in natural objects of consumption, high duties on manufactured articles, if effective, would be contrary to justice as between one class and another, and would be premiums on sloth, waste, and bad workmanship." *

**Commercial Policy of other Nations.**

Whatever may be said in some quarters of Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy in later years, there can be no two opinions as to his insight at this time into the financial policy of Continental countries. Mr. Gladstone notices in the course of his argument the rumoured combination of foreign countries against England, that "union of all the industrial forces of Western Europe against the growing productive power of this redoubtable rival," which was suggested by the *Journal des Débats* for November 9th, 1842; and connects with it "those anti-commercial ideas which have lately been propagated in Germany by Dr. Liszt, which

* *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly*, January, 1843, pp. 267, 268.

appear to have a very strong hold over an active party in America, and which constitute a sort of gospel to the manufacturers of France, with the signal exception of the silk trade of that country." But, admitting the possibility, he would not admit the probability, of the danger. Even assuming such a combination to be practicable, the policy would be disastrous to all parties, and "of them all England is best provided with the means of bearing it." There was another and more ridiculous fear of an armed coalition against England. He acutely analysed the grounds for "so preposterous a conception"—the raising of the French and German tariffs on English linen yarns, and "a disreputable and humiliating proposal" to which Belgium had been forced to consent. Moreover, "Russia, according to her wont in such matters, and Spain have published within the last fifteen months new tariffs, of which it is difficult to say whether they are still worse than or only as execrably bad as those which they succeeded; but in the close rivalry between the old and the new, the latter seem, upon the whole, entitled to the palm of prohibitive rigour."

But, looking around, Mr. Gladstone saw signs of hope—protests of Parisian manufacturers, of American importers, improvements in the tariffs of Holland, Sardinia, and Austria. "Nay, even from the great white bear of Russia there have been semi-inarticulate growls, believed to be meant to express great uneasiness under the present system, and to announce the probability of change." It was urged that England should enter "the unseemly warfare of commercial retaliations."* But why? What would be the consequences of following the example of France? "We must buy dear instead of cheap because she chooses to do it. We must waste our national wealth because she chooses to waste hers." The principles of such a policy would be exactly the same as those of war, "and we are not aware of any moral or social benefit to counterbalance the economical disadvantage thus incurred." Nay, commercial retaliation may engender even more acrimony than war; "on the same principles as those which have led Machiavelli to teach that a man's life may be taken with more safety to the criminal agent than his estate." England, then, must not be tempted to follow France into the snares of Protection. As for the bad language of French journals, "it is received by us, according to our different temperaments and characters, with silence, with wonder, with amusement, with sorrow, with contempt. We trust the predominant feeling is one of regret that a nation, having so many noble gifts, and with which our amity ought to be as close as our neighbourhood, should be so strangely travestied in the momentary organs of her popular sentiment."

**Low-Paid Labour.**

Mr. Gladstone had the courage utterly to deny the ancient and modern fallacy that low-paid labour means prosperous employers. The passage deserves attention as perhaps the first Ministerial feeler which was put out to ascertain the strength of Tory prejudices upon the great question of the repeal of the Corn Laws:—

"There are other facts, to some of which we will cursorily advert in the hope that

* It was about this time that Disraeli, disappointed by Peel's want of appreciation, began to urge the doctrines of reciprocity or retaliation in the House of Commons.

THE FLIGHT OF DÆDALUS (PEEL) AND ICARUS (GLADSTONE).

*(From the Cartoon by "H. B." (John Doyle), published in* 1844.)

our readers may follow out the trains of thought which they suggest, and which all tend to encourage the hope that our agriculture has a strength of which no hostile Parliament can deprive it. If we ask the British farmer why it is that he requires Protection, he will probably reply, on account of the high rate of wages which, besides his rates, he has to pay. But if this were so, it would be at least a probable consequence that he would thrive most in the country where the rate of wages is lowest, and least where it is highest. So far, however, is this from being true, that we apprehend the proposition would be less wide of the mark, if it were inverted."*

It would be difficult to overestimate either the merit or the significance of this remarkable "Free Trade manifesto." For fifty years all but forgotten, it deserves special notice as one of the best in matter, form, and style of all Mr. Gladstone's essays, and as the decisive proof that in his mental march he was then crossing the Rubicon which separates the domain of monopoly and privilege from the province of economic liberalism. The article, which extends to more than fifty pages, is more as well as less than the review which it professes to be of the new commercial tariffs just set up in Great Britain, America, Germany, and other Continental states. It is also an important party pamphlet designed to reason the agricultural and other Protected interests out of their timidity, slothfulness, and ignorance; a brilliant though unsuccessful attempt to illuminate the Tory party.† Lastly, it is probably the finest piece of economic argument ever composed by a busy Minister—a work upon the strength of which some professors might have slept and lectured in peace and reputation for half a century. As an illustration, let us detach from the thread of the argument one short passage in which Mr. Gladstone contemplates England isolated and at war:—

**Economic Isolation.**

"England stands to the rest of the world rather in the condition of a producing than of a consuming country. . . . As a general rule she receives what is unwrought and she gives what is wrought; or she receives what is little wrought and gives what is much wrought. Of two countries, the one thus situated and the other in the inverse position, we believe the latter to be more at the mercy of the former than the former of the latter; while we freely admit that either can confer upon the other immense benefit or can inflict on it enormous injury. The country which by capital and skill has become the greatest workshop of the world has already passed through the stages of material advancement in which the nations that are her great customers still remain, and has made good her ground beyond them. Her enormous capital may waste for generations before it sinks to the level of equality with that of other countries. If all regular exchange of productions were to cease, she has the hoards of accumulated labour upon which to subsist; and she would then be in the condition of the richest among the inhabitants of a beleaguered city pressed with famine as to her command of necessaries and comforts by the power of money. From that cessation she indeed, with the rest,

* Mr. Gladstone supports his paradox by the "striking circumstance" that "the cheap labour of Ireland is much more sensitive to foreign competition than the dear labour of England."

† Mr. Gladstone, it is true, disclaims any intention to deal "with the unfruitful struggles of party." But he contrives to say a little even in refusing to say anything:—"We shall not question in this place either the sincerity or the wisdom of the late Administration in the proposals of May, 1841. [He forgets, however, and thirty-five pages later pillories them for their timber scheme.] Still less shall we stop to notice the silly charge against Sir Robert Peel, that he has surreptitiously appropriated the principles and the measures of his opponents," etc.

would suffer dreadfully. If we take it into the account that our wants increase in this world with our wealth, and our sensibilities to privation perhaps more rapidly than either, it may be that our highly stimulated and pampered appetite would be worse calculated to endure the processes of commercial retrogression than might be the case in other countries, if there be such as are poorer indeed in their possessions but richer in their contentment. Subjectively, therefore, the infliction upon England, or, at least, its first shock and pressure, might be equal to or even greater than that to be experienced elsewhere; but as to the absolute loss of wealth from the stoppage of the beneficial exchange of productions, it is clear that she who holds most has most to spend. If the florid and full-blooded constitution cannot bear depletion, much less can the spare and meagre one."

In conclusion Mr. Gladstone urges that it is the duty of England to look for social and economic improvement not to Protective laws, but rather to "the moral and spiritual life of her own children in these her own borders":—

"Her material greatness has grown out of her social and religious soundness, and out of the power and integrity of individual character: let us hope that it will not react, that it is not reacting, by corroding contaminations upon the stock from which it has sprung. It is well to talk of our geographical position; but this does not alone make a nation great in industrial pursuits. There is our mineral wealth; not so much, probably, greater than that of other lands, as earlier extracted and employed; and whence proceeded that earlier extraction and application? There is our capital, the fruit of our accumulated industry; why does this exceed the capital of other nations, but because there was more industry, and therefore more accumulation? There are our inventions; they did not fall upon us from the clouds like the ancilia of Rome; they are the index and the fruit of powerful and indefatigable thought applied to their subject matter. It is in the creature Man, such as God has made him in this island, that the moving cause of the commercial pre-eminence of the country is to be found; and his title to that pre-eminence is secure if he can in himself but be preserved, or even rescued, from degeneracy."

**Distress in the Country, 1843.**

In the Queen's Speech which opened the Parliamentary session for 1843, her Majesty regretted "the diminished receipts from some of the ordinary sources of revenue," and feared "that it must be in part attributed to the reduced consumption of many articles, caused by that depression of the manufacturing industry of the country which has so long prevailed, and which her Majesty has so long and deeply lamented."

On February 13th Viscount Howick asked for these paragraphs to be read aloud by the clerk at the table, and then rose to move that the House should resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to take them into consideration. The speech was an able one. Howick first proved that the distress prevailed in agricultural as well as in manufacturing districts, in the coast as well as the inland towns. Shoals of beggars everywhere infested the roads; not traditional mendicants, but whole families or groups of families, half-naked, at the point of starvation, begging their way hopelessly and helplessly from place to place. Howick then sought for the true cause. It was not over-taxation—in that respect England was better off than other countries—nor over-production, over-speculation, or the too sudden introduction of machinery. These, on Sir Robert Peel's showing, could only produce local and temporary distress. Nor the new Poor Law—for the distress was as severe in Scotland, where the Poor Laws had not been altered; nor, finally, the medium of exchange—the favourite resort of quack statesmen on occasions when it is necessary to dupe that pudding-

headed class which is always ready to believe that a Government by tampering with money can produce wealth. No, the true cause lay not here, but in the barriers and restrictions on trade, "and especially upon that article which forms the staple food of the people." Relax these restrictions, in would rush a flood of imported goods, and "such an increase would at once set in motion to the same extent the industry of the country."

**Restrictions on Trade the Cause.**

At this point expressions of dissent came from the Ministerial benches. But Howick met the objectors by a quotation from the speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone the year before in the debate on the Foreign Cattle Bill, in which he had shown "with great ability and with triumphant superiority of argument, against his own friends—if indeed they are still his friends who sit behind him"—the futility of the objections to the measure. Mr. Gladstone had argued (on May 23rd, 1842) that the proposed change would only create a moderate increase in the importation of cattle; but it did not follow from this that they were to consider the benefit of the change as measured by the reduction of price. The passage cited by Lord Howick ran as follows:—

"Suppose that 50,000 head of cattle were to be annually imported, such importation would produce but a small effect upon the prices of meat, but it would create an import trade to the amount of half a million of money—a trade which in its nature would tend by a smooth, and under ordinary circumstances a certain, though a gradual, course of operation to produce an export trade in return of an equal amount; which would contribute—he did not say in a moment, but in the course of years—to an increased demand for employment and labour."

The reasoning is certainly remarkable if only as showing what a deep insight Mr. Gladstone had acquired, after only nine months' work in his new Department, into the principles of foreign trade. The cautious phraseology, the limitations and conditions in which he wraps his leading principle, would not have been agreeable either to the declamatory rhetoric of Villiers or to the vigorous expositions and incisive reasonings of Cobden. The style has been rivalled, but not surpassed, by the modern school of economic writers, which opines in the text and gracefully withdraws in a footnote.

Viscount Howick, having completed his quotation, appealed to Mr. Gladstone to say whether, if his argument held good with respect to foreign cattle it must not equally hold good with respect to foreign coffee, to foreign sugar, and to foreign corn. If the importation of cattle to the value of half a million would create a corresponding export trade, would not five or ten times that amount of importation of other articles create a corresponding increase in the employment of industry and capital at home?

**An Appeal to Mr. Gladstone.**

The argument is theoretically unanswerable; but Mr. Gladstone's speech in reply is a masterpiece. He has no difficulty in showing the differences which existed in the ranks of the Opposition on the subject of Corn Law Repeal; how Villiers and Cobden voted for a fixed duty, but could not persuade the Whigs to follow them into the lobby in favour of total repeal. It was equally easy to discredit a foolish attack which Howick had made upon the income-tax. Mr. Gladstone did not deny the existence of distress, or seek to minimise

**The Response.**

either its severity or its prevalence. But a vague motion for a committee upon distress was futile and ridiculous. It might have been imagined that Mr. Gladstone would have evaded the subject of his own speech and the triumphant rhetorical question, "Why do you not apply the same principle to corn which you apply to other commodities?" On

BRITISH PROSPERITY. BASED ON FREE TRADE.
GOD WILL PROSPER THE RIGHTEOUS EFFORTS OF MEN LEAGUED AGAINST TYRANTS, WHO WITHHOLD FOOD FROM THE LABOURER
NATIONAL ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE FORMED IN LONDON, MARCH 27 1839.
THE PEOPLE'S PRAYER. 1815 to 1843.
"Give us, this Day our Daily Bread"
ANSWERED IN 1844.
"We thank thee, O Lord for what thou hast so bountifully provided"
FREE TRADE HAT
W. MARRIOTT, MANUFACTURER OF THE CORN LAW REPEAL HAT, 33, ST ANDREWS ROAD, NEW KENT ROAD, LONDON.
WE EXCHANGE OUR SUPERABUNDANT CROPS FOR BRITISH MANUFACTURES

PRINT INSERTED IN THE CROWN OF THE "FREE TRADE HAT."

the contrary, he had the skill and courage to find an answer, the only practical and reasonable answer, the only answer which was possible for an honest statesman and an acute economist whom circumstances had placed by the side of Peel as a Minister of Free Trade and a creature of the Protectionist interests:—

"The answer . . . is the simple fact that the corn trade in this country has been dealt with, not merely for a series of years, but for a series of centuries, in a different manner from the trade in any other article. Hon. gentlemen may

quarrel with my allegation, and I admit that I do not think that the mere circumstance of existence of a law or a practice for a length of time is a sufficient reason for its being perpetuated; but if objections be made, and even if their validity were acknowledged, even that would not in my mind justify immediate and violent changes. . . . The noble lord was pleased to quote a passage from a speech of mine last year in which I made a reference to the possible importation of 50,000 head of cattle. I am willing to make every concession to the noble lord, and to allow to him without grudging all the advantage that he may be able to extract from that observation of mine. On the occasion adverted to by the noble lord, I ventured to say—and I do not know whether the words quoted by the noble lord were altogether accurate,* but I have no desire to apply to them any material qualification; but I believe I said—that the increase of our imports by the admission of foreign cattle would produce, either by direct or indirect means, and not at once but in the course of time, a corresponding extension of our exports. I do not shrink from the avowal of this proposition; but still I think that, according to the particular circumstances of each case, the adoption of the principle must be watched and guarded, and carefully adjusted by a careful consideration of those circumstances. . . . The noble lord quoted the opinion of Mr. Burke, with respect to the abstract question of Protection; and I recollect that that eminent statesman, in another speech, gave quite as strong an opinion to the effect that every statesman must endeavour to combine his regard to general principles with a careful estimate of the actual circumstances by which they are limited in their application. Mr. Burke said that the statesman who refused to take circumstances into his view and consideration is not merely in error, he is mad—stark mad—metaphysically mad."

Mr. Gladstone then proceeded to analyse with great skill the probable results of a repeal of the Corn Laws; and expressed his opinion that of the three classes connected with the land the owner would be least affected by the change. His rent would not fall on account of the competition. But Mr. Gladstone apparently did not see that this theory cut at the very root of his chief argument against change—the displacement of the agricultural labourers. If farmers continued to compete for farms under Free Trade they would continue to compete for labour to till the farms:—

"I know that there are arguments in the storehouses of Political Economy about the distribution of the precious metals, and a course of circumstances tending to neutralise this derangement of the terms of exchange—remote causes, as I have said before, which would take time such as I am not able to define to come into operation; but surely it would be a violation of a most sacred duty to watch over the interests of our countrymen, if we were for such inducements as these—if upon speculations so vague and indeterminate, we were to consent to sacrifice a certain source of employment for the population which, even if on abstract principles of economy not the most thrifty, yet is an employment which maintains millions of the population, and an employment which cannot be replaced by any sufficient substitute, if a sudden change of the description proposed were to be made."

An extraordinary speech, indeed; marked throughout by honesty, sincerity, and a subtlety which, if not always equal to the complexities of the subject matter, is certainly, considering all the circumstances, nothing less than marvellous. The speech made a great impression, and its reference to the "temporary" nature of the Corn Laws was brought up time after time by the Whig speakers. One member said that the Vice-President of the Board of Trade "had brought forward opinions

* Howick's quotation (Hansard, Feb. 13th, 1843) is slightly different from the words given to Mr. Gladstone by Hansard for May 23rd, 1842. But Howick's quotation is preferable from Mr. Gladstone's point of view as being somewhat ampler and more guarded. I have therefore used it in the text.

and facts which would do more for Free Trade than any other speech he had heard"; another, P. M. Stewart, rather cleverly upset out of Mr. Gladstone's own mouth one of his lesser arguments against the repeal of the Corn Laws, viz. the hostility of Continental tariffs:—

"Whether the right hon. gentleman had seen an article which had appeared in the *Foreign and Colonial Review* on the commercial policy of this country he knew not; but it was in many respects so like the speech delivered by the right hon. gentleman the other evening, that he could not help recommending him to peruse it. It contained a paragraph relating to hostile tariffs, which he would read to the House."*

Since, added the Whig member, there was no apprehension in the mind of the writer when he wrote this, there ought, by the closest possible analogy, to be no fears in the mind of the right honourable gentleman.

At the beginning of the Session of 1843, in an entry for January 16th, Greville notices in his Diary the subjects "which now nearly monopolise" public attention. These are—the condition of the people, moral and physical, the Education question and the Tractarian controversy. But "first and foremost there is the Corn Law and the League; the Corn Law which Charles Villiers (I must do him the justice to say) long ago predicted to me would supersede every other topic of interest, and so it undoubtedly has."

The strength of the Anti-Corn Law League was already undisputed. A great increase in its activity had taken place in the preceding autumn; and the landed interest was already thoroughly alarmed.

**The Anti-Corn Law League (1843).**

An illustration may be drawn from the admissions of a pamphleteer, who, after a sharp attack upon the "new men" in English politics—their characteristic marks are commercial descent, University education, and a blind belief in the visionary doctrines of Political Economy; their names are Peel and Gladstone—proceeds to give his opinion of Free-Trade literature:—

"We have read deliberately and carefully all the pamphlets of the Anti-Corn Law League, which they seal up in bedizened covers, the better meretriciously to captivate the farmers' and tradesmen's sons and daughters; and we are not at all surprised at the effect which they have produced in popular opinion and popular movement. They are very clever productions got up with great skill; they are arranged in proper form, effectively addressed to various interests, and they are guardedly considerate and tender towards existing opinions and prejudices. If we had a dozen men in the House of Commons, devoted to what we hold to be the true interests of the country, as active as the directors of the League movement, as determined to go straight onward to their object, Sir R. Peel would be forced to recant in the ensuing session all that he said concerning Free Trade in the last session; or, on the other hand, he would be compelled to place himself at the head of the movement party, and with Mr. Gladstone and such colleagues as he would get from that party, try to carry into execution the Free Trade policy with decision, promptitude, and completeness."†

* Hansard, February 16th, 1843. The passage quoted by Stewart is to be found on p. 299.

† "Reflections on the Designs and Possible Consequences of the Proceedings of the Anti-Corn Law League." London, 1843, pp. 1—2. Peel's position, indeed, was manifestly untenable. Corn Law repeal was not merely the logical concomitant of tariff reform; it was also the great measure upon which the Free Traders were expending all their energies. Considering the tact and cleverness of the managers of the League, this Protectionist writer was astonished, not at the effect produced, but "at seeing that effect

But the force which was behind Bright and Cobden, a force generated and developed in the great manufacturing districts of the North, by men who knew their minds and knowing dared maintain, was not yet able to command a majority even of the Whig party in the House of Commons. Cobden, however, now began to direct a continuous fire of logic against the Ministerial benches. In the famous and much misrepresented speech of February 17th, 1843, in which he fixed upon the unfortunate Sir Robert Peel a personal responsibility for the Corn Law and the sugar duties, Cobden took the leading members of the Ministry one by one. The order is certainly striking and suggestive, especially when we remember that Mr. Gladstone had not yet succeeded to Lord Ripon or secured a place in the Cabinet:—

CHARLES PELHAM VILLIERS.

**Cobden and Gladstone.**

"The colleagues of the right hon. baronet who have spoken on this occasion have introduced the Corn Laws into this debate, and have discussed that subject in connection with the present distress. But what says the right hon. member the Vice-President of the Board of Trade? Why, he says there are not two opinions on the subject of Free Trade. What says the right hon. baronet (Sir R. Peel), at the head of the Government? Why, he says that on this point are we all agreed. And the right hon. baronet, the Secretary of the Home Department [Sir J. Graham], says that the principles of Free Trade are the principles of common sense."

References to Goulburn, Stanley, and Knatchbull follow. They too are claimed as Free Traders in the abstract; and probably not without reason, for Stanley's defection at the critical moment was no doubt due to a violent exercise of paternal authority.

It is indeed highly probable, if not certain, that a mild intellectual conviction that Free Trade, if not immediately expedient, was not only theoretically correct, but also in the long run certain to come about, had stolen into the minds of the leaders of both political parties so early as the year 1836; if, at least, we may judge from the debates which preceded the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act in that year. It took a decade

limited in so great a degree to the manufacturers who resort to the Manchester, Leeds, and Huddersfield markets." It is no doubt true, as he goes on to say, "that the influence centring in these three towns comprised four-fifths of the whole moral force of the League. London, as usual, was divided, impotent, and useless." (*Cf.* Francis Place's letters to Cobden, quoted in Mr. Graham Wallas's Life of Place.)

of national starvation and agitation to make the syllogism practical and the conclusion complete. A rather interesting, though indirect, proof that Mr. Gladstone had early taken the logical step from Free Trade in silk and cotton and wool and the other raw materials of manufacture, to Free Trade in the staple food of the silk and cotton and woollen operatives, may be found in a letter written by Stafford Northcote in 1847. To Mr. Gladstone, Northcote had paid from the first "habitual deference." What he says may therefore be taken as an echo of his chief:—

Mr. Gladstone a Free Trader.

"A *Free Trader* I have always been since I could form any opinion of my own on the subject; and I advocated the repeal of the Corn Laws—that is to say, the principle of Free Trade in corn—*before* Sir Robert Peel announced his change of sentiment, and I should also add, *before* Lord John Russell had abandoned his fixed duty."

But the intensity, still more the simplicity, of Mr. Gladstone's Free Tradeism may easily be exaggerated. It is difficult for a Minister to cherish that unswerving, unorthodox attachment for a simple principle and a simple measure embodying it which has characterised so many great agitators and reformers. "Even when the Corn Laws were about to be repealed, he did not, I think," wrote Lord Farrer to the present author, "take the broad views of Cobden and the Free Traders. I remember meeting him at a small dinner party at Northcote's, and was much struck by the apparent frankness and freedom of his talk. But he did not insist on the expediency of giving people cheap bread or of opening the foreign markets to our manufactures, so much as on the great evils in the form of speculation and disastrous ups and downs of prices caused by the sliding scale."

That the Free Traders did not understand or trust Mr. Gladstone is hardly surprising. They could not easily believe that a Churchman, still less a High Churchman, least of all a State Churchman, could be a thorough Free Trader. Then they were puzzled by an asceticism which they chose to regard as hypocrisy. There were, indeed, deep down in his character old stumps of Presbyterianism which were never rooted out, but stuck, storm beaten and blossomless, to the very end, in strange contrast to the imported seedlings that grew and flourished around them. At this time, if his main work lay in the ministry of Free Trade, his strenuous leisure was devoted to the Church. An almost Jesuitical appearance lent itself to satire. So Cobden, in an argument against the sugar monopoly which occurs in one of his great League speeches in Covent Garden:—

His Asceticism.

"I believe that the ambassador from the Brazils is here at present, and I think I can imagine an interview between him and the President of the Board of Trade.* He delivers his credentials; he has come to arrange a treaty of commerce. I think I see the President of the Board of Trade calling up a solemn, earnest, pious expression, and saying, 'You are from the Brazils; we shall be happy to trade with you, but we cannot conscientiously receive slave-grown produce.' His Excellency is a good man of business; so he says, 'Well, then, we will see if we can trade together in some other way. What have you to sell us?' 'Why,' returns the President of the Board of Trade, 'cotton goods; in these articles we are the largest exporters in the world!' 'Indeed!' exclaims his

* Mr. Gladstone became President of the Board of Trade, with a seat in the Cabinet, on the 10th of June, 1843.

Excellency. 'Cotton did you say? Where is cotton brought from? 'Why?' replies the Minister, 'hem—chiefly from the United States,' and at once the question will be, 'Pray, is it free-grown cotton or slave-grown cotton?' Now I leave you to imagine the answer, and I leave you also to picture the countenance of the President of the Board of Trade."*

And about this time Malmesbury, after a dinner with Mr. Gladstone, records in his Memoirs that he is "disappointed with his appearance, which is that of a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic."

Meanwhile the cause of Free Trade in corn was gaining ground, thanks to two debates which were initiated by Villiers and Lord John Russell; and some concession was made to the repealers by a reduction in the duties on corn imported from Canada, which was carried by means of resolutions proposed by Stanley.

**A Cabinet Minister, 1843.**

Mr. Gladstone was now a Cabinet Minister, and he has recorded that the first opinion he ever gave in that capacity was for withdrawing a Bill to provide, at the expense of the general taxpayer, an Anglican education for factory children. In these publicly supported schools the master was to be appointed, the inspector approved, and the books selected by the Diocesan. These "safeguards" were not enough for Sir Robert Inglis, who, with the more extreme Anglicans, joined in the indignant protests of the Nonconformist and Roman Catholic bodies. Graham dropped instead of amending the education clauses, and carried his Factory Bill in a mutilated form in the following year. An interesting letter from Hook, then vicar of Leeds, advocating the abstention of the State from religious education, may have influenced Mr. Gladstone.†

**Exportation of Machinery.**

On August 10th, 1843, Mr. Gladstone moved the second reading of a Bill to legalise the exportation of machinery, then prohibited by law, although a certain administrative discretion was left to the Board of Trade. The ancient notion that machine-making was a secret which could be kept within certain geographical limits had long been abandoned by practical men; but the law still rested for its utility on the grounds stated in the preamble to the Act of 1696, that "whereas a very useful and profitable invention, craft, or mystery existed in this country for the making of silk stockings and other articles," etc. etc. But in 1843 machines could be manufactured abroad, "and the only question now was whether we should inflict a small additional charge upon the prosecution of foreign manufacturing enterprise which the prohibition of our machinery seemed to enable us to do." But why machines only? If we wanted to handicap our competitors, why not prohibit the exportation of cheap iron, cheap coal and other things which are made use of by foreigners for the purpose of rivalling English manufactures? Hindley, the member for Ashton, and a manufacturer of yarns, who attempted to move an amendment, was warned that the principle of prohibition, if retained, "ought to be made to apply to the exportation of yarns and

* *Cf.* Morley's "Life of Cobden," Jubilee Edition, vol. i., p. 283. Mr. Morley draws attention to the alliance between the West Indian sugar planters and the English corn growers. They co-operated to plunder the public with all the disinterested zeal of non-competing monopolists.

† Life of Hook, vol. ii., p. 346.

twist; for the possession of these yarns enabled the foreign manufacturer to rival us in our finer fabrics." Until 1824 the law had prohibited the emigration of artisans, "and he must say that he thought that the arguments by which that prohibition was supported were quite as strong as those which were now alleged in support of the prohibition of the exportation of machinery." Mr. Gladstone had arguments for every type of mind. Suppose the prohibition to be in itself desirable, there was no remedy against smuggling. "The enforcing of Customs prohibitions outwards is very different from enforcing prohibitions inwards;" for a prohibited article once imported is always liable to seizure. Besides, the idea of a tax on exports was abhorrent to the country. "It was the opinion of practical Custom-house officers—and had been since 1824—that this was a law incapable of execution." Moreover, he strongly protested against the power to relax a law being vested in the Privy Council. "One object of all laws should be to limit as far as possible all such discretionary power on the part of the Executive." It is characteristic of Mr. Gladstone that he should have found this conservative and Constitutional ground for abolishing an old-fashioned trade law. He quoted the authority of Mr. Huskisson and a memorial from the machine-makers of Leeds, an interview with an Italian gentleman and a deputation which had come to him at the Board of Trade. But the grand point on which he insisted was this: "It was no longer a question as to whether foreigners should have machinery of their own; but the question was whether this country should not have the machine-making of the whole world." They need not be timid. British manufacturers would have a natural monopoly—freedom from cost of carriage and "the first access to and the most entire command of new inventions and improvements."

Sir Robert Giffen, in one of his financial essays, has drawn special attention to this speech, which he justly regards as an important landmark in the history of Free Trade. It had an immediate effect; for the second reading was carried by a majority of 78 in a House of 114.

Parliament was opened on the 1st of February, 1844, and the Corn Laws immediately became the subject of discussion. Villiers delivered a sharp attack on Mr. Gladstone, quoting from an article which had just appeared in the *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly*—"a publication which professed to be an organ of the Government, and was known to be patronised by the President of the Board of Trade." But Villiers had made an unfortunate selection. Mr. Gladstone replied with asperity that "he was not the author of that article, he did not know whose article it was, and he had never read a line of it."

**Attacked by Villiers, 1844.**

The social and industrial revolution which was taking place owing to the establishment of the railway system was forcing itself upon the attention of the President of the Board of Trade. What should be the attitude of the State to those great monopolies, the railway companies? Accordingly, on February 5th, he proposed the appointment of a Select Committee on Railways. On the 4th of March the Select Committee had reported, and Mr. Gladstone proposed some resolutions to carry out their recommendations, the most important of which was a reduction in the numbers and a change in the constitution of the Private Bill Railway Committees.

**Railways.**

On the 12th of March Cobden brought forward an important motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the effects of Protective duties on imports upon the interests of tenant farmers and farm labourers. The miserable state of the agricultural poor could be proved by statistics and illustrated by heartrending quotations. In Gloucestershire the peasant was worse off than in 1683. Since 1790 wages had scarcely increased; wages computed in food had certainly declined; and rents had risen from 200 to 250 per cent. From Austin's inquiry and report the results of this last catastrophe were made evident. The demoralisation and licentiousness of the rural districts were easily explained when in one village there were found to be on an average thirty-six persons in each cottage, when a large family occupied a single room, and when a clergyman who had been asked to dispose of some blankets for charity discovered on making inquiries that "in fifteen families of his parish, consisting of eighty-four individuals, there were only thirty-three beds and thirty-five blankets," twenty-five of which were "mere patched rags." And yet the Corn Laws still remained, an artificial aggravation of all this squalor and misery!

Protection (1844).

To Mr. Gladstone was left the obviously uncongenial task of replying. He could only show that such a committee would have too vague a reference, that it would alarm the agricultural interests, and that it would be involved in abstract questions of Political Economy. "It must be a bad case indeed," said Bright, who spoke later in the evening, "when the right hon. gentleman cannot make a better speech in defence of it."

On June 6th the Government produced a Dissenters' Chapels Bill*—"this honest, this excellent Bill," as Macaulay called it. Mr. Gladstone felt bound to explain his support of it, which he did in a long and learned speech. He maintained that they were not passing a Bill "for the encouragement of error," but as a matter of simple justice to the Unitarians. The main interest of the speech may best be represented by the opening words of Sheil, who continued the debate: "I am delighted," he said, "to hear from such high authority that this Bill is perfectly reconcilable with the strictest and the sternest principles of State conscience. I cannot doubt that the right hon. gentleman, the champion of Free Trade, will ere long become the advocate of the most unrestricted liberty of thought."

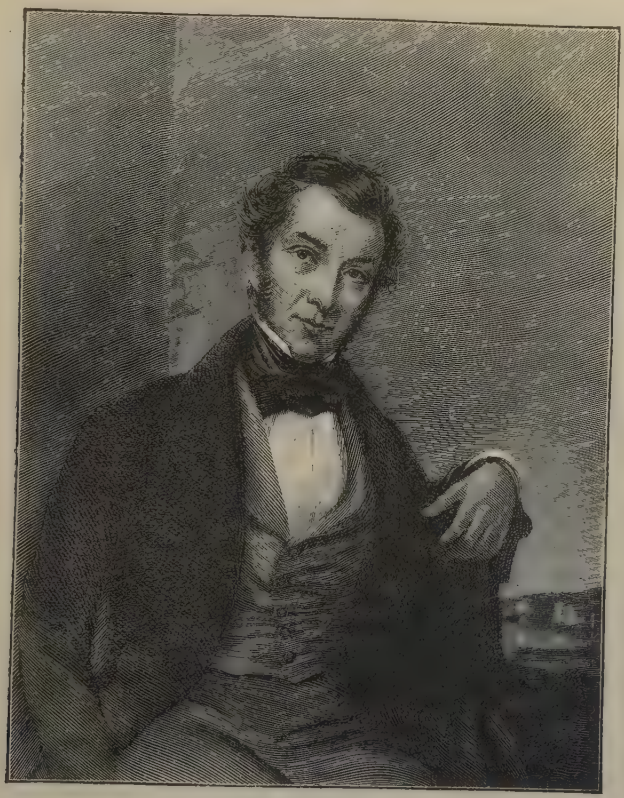
Sheil's Forecast.

Mr. Gladstone's vote on this occasion was to cause him trouble later. He was to be accused of propagating Unitarianism, because he wished the law to give the Unitarians what ordinary justice required. Shaftesbury wrote :—

"Sir W. Follett said on the Dissent Bill, that though a Trinitarian might have founded a chapel, we had no reason to believe that he wished those who came after him to preach the same doctrine! And that inexplicable statesman, Mr. Gladstone, intimated that all Dissent tended to Socinianism, and that a vast portion of the founders were, in fact, Unitarians!"

* This Bill was due to the result of the famous litigation over Lady Hewley's charities. These charities, though in the hands of Unitarians, had been judged by the House of Lords to be Trinitarian trusts. In order to prevent the alienation of property on the score of changed belief, the Bill proposed that twenty-five years of undisturbed possession should constitute a valid legal title to continued ownership.

Goulburn produced the Budget on April 29th. But Mr. Gladstone did not speak until the House went into committee on the Customs duties. Earlier in the month, however, he had made an interesting speech in reply to a request of Mr. Milner Gibson that agricultural statistics should be published by the Government. Mr. Gladstone promised that the Government would do their best, and expressed his opinion "that a great approximation to steadiness of prices would be the result of a



RICHARD COBDEN.

(*From the Engraving published in* 1843, *after the Drawing by C. A. Duval.*)

good system of agricultural statistics." One could almost imagine Mr. Gladstone advancing the paradox that statistics have more effect on prices than prices on statistics!

In this year a literary and philosophical club, to which Mr. Gladstone belonged, was brought to grief by the rancorous nature of a *post-mortem* religious examination into Sterling's theological opinions which was conducted by a religious newspaper. At the Sterling Club, to quote Mr. Gladstone's own words, "we used to meet for the purpose of conversation and discussion. Its charm consisted in meeting with men of the most various

**The Sterling Club (1844).**

opinions, and the talk often elicited a manifestation or conflict of antagonistic principles. Wilberforce and Manning, and my brother-in-law Lyttelton, and Copley Fielding and Thirlwall were members." Such a society may well have extended, as it certainly proves, the intellectual width and already broad sympathies of its most distinguished member. On the death of Sterling and the publication of his Memoirs by Archdeacon Hare, the *Record* killed the club by a statement that it was founded to commemorate the rationalistic unbelief of John Sterling. In speaking of the origin of the club and its name, Mr. Gladstone said: "It was called the Sterling Club, not in honour of John Sterling, but because he was its first and most prominent member, and because we were all supposed in some way or other to be sterling men. The attacks and insinuations of the *Record*, however, eventually killed the club. Manning was the first who thought it prudent to withdraw his name, then Wilberforce and others. We endeavoured to keep it together. It was removed to another locality, where it lingered on for a few years." *

The year 1845 saw the secession of Newman, and the transference of much spiritual force from the Church of England to that of Rome. The Tractarian movement lost most of its literary power, and tended more and more towards the ritualism which in its earlier stages Dr. Arnold had so severely characterised as "a dress, a ritual, a name, a ceremony, objects so pitiful that if gained ever so completely they would make no man the wiser or the better"—a judgment in which Dean Stanley concurred when he said that "the trivial elements which produced so much excitement—the Apostolical Succession, the revival of obsolete rubrics, together with one or two patristic tendencies, such as the doctrine of reserve and of mysticism, were the staple of their teaching."

Tractarianism in 1845.

But Tractarianism was not Ritualism; the earlier and more intellectual must not be identified with the later and more ceremonial movement; and unfriendly criticism must not blind us to the strength of the religious and emotional forces which so profoundly influenced not only Mr. Gladstone, but many more of the choicest intellects in Oxford in the later 'thirties and early 'forties. Instead of Bentham politics and Paley religion a new standard of life, a new pattern for imitation, was set up within the Church. The Tract writers longed to make the English Church what the Roman had been abroad—"to make England cease to produce great men (as we count greatness), and for poetry, courage, daring, enterprise, resolution, and broad, honest understanding to substitute devotion, endurance, humility, self-denial, sanctity, and faith." They hoped, in the words of a famous book,† "to draw people from the whirl of business to thought upon themselves, from the clamouring for their rights and the craving of independence to almsgiving, to endurance of wrong, and to the confessional—from early hours in the office and in the field to matins and early service—from doing to praying, from living to fasting."

For a time all went well: official Churchmen and ecclesiastically minded officials thought that the movement would prove a useful antidote to "the Reform mania" of 1832 and to the spirit of irreverence and license

* Purcell's Manning, pp. 274, 276. † Froude's "Nemesis of Faith."

which had been thereby diffused. "Newman's motives were excellent," wrote Palmer, the author of "Origines Liturgicæ," "to counteract the spirit of latitudinarianism and rationalism then prevalent." But negation affords no basis for a movement; and the publication of Tract 90 showed that a subtle reactionary could play as easily with the ethics of subscription as an aggressive revolutionary, and signified that theologians who cannot broaden may develop their doctrines in another and, to an established Church, equally dangerous way. The longitudinal movement seemed to be projecting its guides into Romanism. An inquisition more or less informal was instituted by the Bishops; silence was in certain cases enjoined; and in some conspicuous instances clerical and academical preferment became dependent upon a disavowal of Tractarianism. Little wonder that the followers began to lag behind, restrained by a sense of Church discipline as well as of worldly interest. They began, as it were, to use Newman's doctrine of the economy of truth against Newman himself. Indeed, the leaders, as a shrewd vicar remarked to Roundell Palmer in 1843, had "the prudence to defer the downright avowal of extreme opinions until things are better prepared for their reception. I never read a writing of Newman in the Tracts in which he did not appear to me to insinuate, 'I could carry the principle much further, but you cannot bear it now.'"

Mr. Gladstone was at this time a far more rigid and uncompromising son of the Anglican Church than either Manning or Newman,* a fact possibly due to his surer and quicker insight into the political principles involved; and this it was no doubt which prevented him from being tempted to follow the example of so many of his closest friends. His own determination to remain only increased his eagerness to hold them back and to make the Church of England approximate as closely as might be to the ideal which he cherished. But from time to time some impetuous outpost would precipitate a crisis. And so it happened in 1845.

**Mr. Gladstone Stands Firm.**

Ward's "Ideal Church" had appeared in the summer of 1844, and at once alarmed cautious High Churchmen of the type of Manning and Gladstone. The latter reviewed it in an article which, after much pruning, was admitted into the *Quarterly Review*, and which is now republished in the "Gleanings" in something like its original form. The University decided to take active steps to enforce the validity of its tests in this flagrant case. After much consultation Gladstone and Manning decided to record a *non-placet*. But the "Ideal Church" was condemned by 777 to 391 votes, and its writer "degraded" by 569 to 511. Two and a half years later, when Mr. Gladstone stood for the University of Oxford, the supporters of his opponent, Round, twitted him with having recorded this vote against the censure of Mr. Ward. It is not usual for a candidate to take any

**"Ideal" Ward.**

* I mean in formulating his religious conceptions. At the same time, in those days he had less objection to civil jurisdiction over the Church. "I do not think," he writes to Manning, "I take quite so strong a view as you do of the *de jure* qualifications of Parliament to counsel the Crown touching the Church in matters primarily or partially relating to her temporalities" (Purcell's Manning, vol. i., p. 262). The State was more of a Church to Gladstone than to Manning. Aristotle himself had not a more elevated conception of politics.

personal part in a University election; but on that occasion Mr. Gladstone broke through the rule by writing a letter * in reply to his critics. "This is true," he wrote. "In that censure two propositions, totally distinct, were unhappily combined. The first of these condemned his opinions and proceedings: the second declared his personal dishonesty. I was ready to condemn his opinions and proceedings, as I stated at the time to persons of influence, connected, as I believe, with the framing of the motion against him; and as I had indeed already done myself, to the very best of such capacity as I possessed, through the medium of a powerful organ of opinion—the *Quarterly Review* (for December, 1844). I was not ready to declare Mr. Ward's personal dishonesty; without presuming to judge for others I thought that question was one not fit for the adjudication of a human tribunal."

After quoting seven different passages from the "Ideal," the decree submitted that "the passages . . . are utterly inconsistent with the Articles of Religion of the Church of England and with the declaration in respect of those articles made and subscribed by William George Ward previously and in order to his being admitted to the degrees of B.A. and M.A. respectively, and with the good faith of him, the said William George Ward, in respect of such declaration and subscription."

Mr. Gladstone, as his supporters urged in the election of 1847, felt that Mr. Ward's personal good faith could not be impeached by one who had censured him publicly and severely, who considered Convocation incompetent to pronounce upon inward motives, and who regarded Ward as infatuated but not dishonest. He therefore voted against the decree, "though at the obvious risk of being misunderstood."

**Mr. Gladstone Resigns, 1845.**

As soon as the Parliamentary session of 1845 opened, it became known that Mr. Gladstone had resigned. Peel had postponed the Maynooth endowment scheme for nearly a year to avoid a contingency which would deprive him of his mainstay in financial reform. But the Prime Minister could not any longer delay the fulfilment of his pledge to improve Irish education and increase the grant to Maynooth. Many of Mr. Gladstone's friends tried to dissuade him; and among them Manning, who was in favour of concurrent endowment as a final solution of the Irish Church question and as the best means of preserving to the English Church her Irish revenues. But Mr. Gladstone's principles never allowed this; and a letter dated April 26th, 1845, affords an interesting illustration of the almost rigid consistency of his Irish Church policy. It is melancholy to reflect upon the amount of odium and the number of virulent attacks which he might have avoided by adopting a policy of base compromise and unblushing materialism. Manning, it should be added, like many other friends, had tried hard but vainly to induce Mr. Gladstone to remain in office. The letter is as follows:—

"MY DEAR MANNING,—I am anxious, but not about my own reputation nor about Maynooth. My cares have reference to the future fortunes of the Irish Church. I have always looked upon the Maynooth measure as what is called buying time—a process that presupposes the approach of the period of surrender. Whether or not time will be actually gained as the result of the measure, or whether the thing given and the thing sought will both be lost, is, I think, very doubtful.

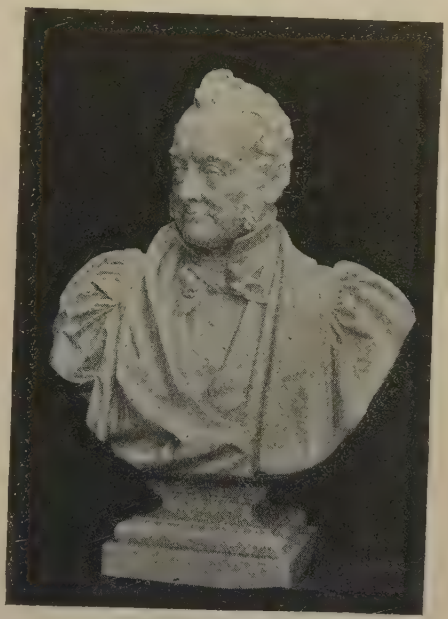
* Dated July 27th, 1847; published by Mr. Gladstone s Election Committee at Oxford.

"What we pay, however, I do not consider to consist chiefly in the £17,000 a year, but in the cession we make of most important parts of the argument for the maintenance of the Church in Ireland. . . . And now as to your two precepts, I can say nothing about my disposition to return to office (let alone that of other people to recall me) until my mind is made up what policy ought to be adopted and maintained with regard to the Irish Church as the guide of future years. Believe me, ever affectionately yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

Mr. Gladstone's critics have always regarded his action in this instance as at best a piece of Quixotic absurdity. He voted for the Maynooth Bill. Why then did he resign? Mr. Gladstone himself explained, in a noble speech on the Address, that he made the sacrifice in the interests of public morality and from motives of self-respect. In "Church and State" he had advocated a system which he now regarded as impracticable and impossible. "The cause of my resignation was," he said, "that I had taken upon myself, some years before, to state to the world the views which I believed to be most conformable to the relations of a Christian State, to the profession of religion, and to policy with regard to religion; and as the intentions of the Government as respected the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth pointed to a measure at variance with the views I had advocated, I doubted whether it would be right that I should remain in office as a Minister of the Crown."

**Why He made the Sacrifice.**



W. G. WARD.
(*From the Bust by Mario Raggi.*)

This is surely simple enough. But, unfortunately, the speech as a whole was too labyrinthine. Greville, who had gone to the House to hear it, wrote in his Diary:—

"Gladstone's explanation was ludicrous. Everybody said that he had only succeeded in showing that his resignation was quite uncalled for."

And one of Lord Selborne's correspondents wrote to him at the time:—

"I am curious to hear from you some explanation about the part Gladstone is taking. If ever I try to learn anything of his intentions, or the present phases of his principles, by reading his speeches, I am always left more in the dark than ever. He certainly understands how to shroud himself in obscurity and thick darkness."

We get a similar impression from one of Cobden's last letters (January 19th, 1865):—

"Gladstone's speeches have the effect on my mind of a beautiful strain of music. I

can rarely remember any clear unqualified expression of opinion on any subject outside his political, economical, and financial statements. I remember on the occasion when he left Sir Robert Peel's Government on account of the Maynooth Grant, and when the House met in unusual numbers to hear his explanation, I sat beside Villiers and Ricardo for an hour, listening with real pleasure to his beautiful rhetorical involutions and evolutions, and at the close turning to one of my neighbours and exclaiming, 'What a marvellous talent is this! Here have I been listening with pleasure for an hour to his explanation, and I know no more why he left the Government than before he commenced.' It is, however, a talent of questionable value for public leadership." *

But posterity has too much cause to be grateful for the nicety of Mr. Gladstone's political morality to be over critical about the casuistry which he employed in its defence. The deed itself is eloquent. Mr. Gladstone's words are hardly necessary to indicate the extent of the sacrifice :—

"My whole purpose was to place myself in a position in which I should be free to consider my course without being liable to any just suspicion on the ground of personal interest. It is not profane if I now say, '*with a great price obtained I this freedom.*' The political association in which I stood was to me at the time the *alpha* and *omega* of public life. The Government of Sir Robert Peel was believed to be of immovable strength. My place, as President of the Board of Trade, was at the very kernel of its most interesting operations; for it was in progress, from year to year, with continually waxing courage, towards the emancipation of industry, and therein towards the accomplishment of another great and blessed work of public justice. Giving up what I highly prized, aware that

male sarta
Gratia nequicquam coit, et rescinditur,

I felt myself open to the charge of being opinionated, and wanting in deference to really great authorities; and I could not but know that I should inevitably be regarded as fastidious and fanciful, fitter for a dreamer, or possibly a schoolman, than for the active purposes of public life in a busy and moving age." †

In the summer of 1847 Mr. Gladstone was put on his defence by the High Tories of Oxford, who had thrown out Peel for giving way on Roman Catholic emancipation. The charge was not that he had resigned but that he had afterwards recorded his vote for the Maynooth Bill. "This is true," wrote Mr. Gladstone, and he proceeded :—

"However willing I had been upon, and for many years after, my introduction to Parliament, to struggle for the exclusive support of the National religion by the State and to resist all arguments drawn from certain inherited arrangements in favour of a more relaxed system, I found that scarcely a year passed without the fresh adoption of some measure involving the national recognition and the national support of various forms of religion; and, in particular, that a recent and fresh provision had been made for the propagation from a public chair of Arian and Socinian doctrines. The question remaining for me was whether, aware of the opposition of the English people, I should set down as equal to nothing, in a matter primarily connected not with our but their priesthood, the wishes of the people of Ireland, and whether I should avail myself of the popular feeling in regard to Roman Catholics, for the purpose of enforcing against them a system which we had ceased by common consent to enforce against Arians—a system, above all, of which I must say that it never can be conformable to policy, to justice, or even decency, when it has become avowedly partial or onesided in its application."

* Sir Wemyss Reid's Life of Forster, vol. i., p. 366.
† "A Chapter of Autobiography," Gleanings, vol. vii., pp. 117, 118.

Before his resignation Mr. Gladstone had prepared the tariff of 1845, based upon a continuation of the income tax for another period of three years, "not for the purpose of providing the supplies for the year, but distinctly for the purpose of enabling us to make this great experiment of reducing other taxes." A great surplus of nearly three and a half millions, which the income tax had now given, was employed not only in reducing duties but in total abolition. No less than 430 articles were struck off the list. At the same time Mr. Gladstone published a brilliant statistical pamphlet,* in which he drove home the arguments for Free Trade.

**The Results of Tariff Reform (1845).**

The pamphlet, which covers sixty-five pages, and ran to three editions, is in the nature of a commentary on the "Expository Statement of the Customs' Revenue" of the United Kingdom, which had been presented to Parliament at the beginning of the 1845 session. Mr. Gladstone aimed at bringing clearly and definitely into view the leading results which the official figures had established. "It is indeed obvious," he remarks, "that a series of tables so complex and extended afford rather the crude materials of information to the general observer than information itself." Mr. Gladstone's "official cognisance" of the changes in the law in 1842 led him to undertake the inquiry; and he "preferred making it through the medium of the Press rather than occupying so much of the time of the House of Commons . . . as would be requisite for the purpose of an oral exposition essentially involving many figures and details." We shall see later that he did not shrink from the necessary "oral exposition" in the case of his great Budgets.

Mr. Gladstone treats his subject with the greatest caution. He has no desire to exaggerate: "The Act of 1842," he justly claims, "was not merely an Act involving a considerable remission of duties; it was the first attempt to apply general rules to the construction of the tariff of the United Kingdom, and was also the most comprehensive modification of the restrictive system which had ever been accomplished."

Take one of Mr. Gladstone's tables of a representative group of articles, showing the effect on trade of tariff reform:—

| | *Actual loss of revenue on each article.* | *Quantities added to the trade.* | *Value added to the trade.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | £. | | £. |
| 1. Hides | 36,971 | 201,647 cwt. | 453,706 |
| 2. Turpentine | 79,819 | 133,789 cwt. | 53,510 |
| 3. Palm-oil | 8,423 | 99,455 cwt. | 123,774 |
| 4. Olive-oil | 21,957 | 1,631 tuns | 97,860 |
| 5. Bark | 8,891 | 269,171 cwt. | 94,210 |
| 6. Mahogany | 41,148 | 72 tons | 720 |
| 7. Rosewood | 7,264 | 1,198 tons | 11,980 |
| | £204,475 | ——— | £834,720 |

* It is entitled, "Remarks upon recent Commercial Legislation suggested by the Expository Statement of the Revenue from Customs, and other Papers, lately submitted to Parliament by the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, M.P. for Newark." London, Murray, 1845.

The figures in the table, it should be said, are based on a comparison of the entries for consumption in the year July, 1843-4, and a mean of the entries for consumption in the years 1838 and 1840. Mr. Gladstone shows with great skill that these years afford the best available standard for comparison.

"Thus we find," to give Mr. Gladstone's own comment, "with a sacrifice of £204,000 in duties on raw materials, an extension of trade in them to the extent of £834,000. I should describe this as a satisfactory and sufficient rather than as a very remarkable result." Again, "As to the proportion of the trading operations of the country which the measures have embraced. In the Account of Trade and Navigation annually presented to Parliament at its meeting, I find the principal imports of the country specified to the number of one hundred and thirty-five. Of these, the duties have been reduced or removed upon one hundred and six; upon twenty-nine they remain unaltered." And, taking the official valuation of all the imports into the United Kingdom for the year 1843, viz. £70,093,000, Mr. Gladstone found that the value of the articles which were unaffected by the measures of relief only amounted to eight and a half millions sterling, and that of the whole import trade as much as seven-eighths had been affected by the reductions of import duty which Parliament adopted in the years 1842-5.

Mr. Gladstone, though no longer in office, gave loyal and valuable support to the Government in the discussions on the new tariff which took place in the spring. He appears to have spoken "from one of the front benches half-way between the Treasury Bench and the Bar."* Hot debates arose over the reduction in the sugar duties, and Mr. Gladstone alone was thoroughly competent to discriminate and decide the relative values of Java, Muscovado, and Havannah sugars. Equally useful to his old colleagues was his defence of the Government against the agriculturists on the question whether the words grease, lard, and resin should "stand part of the resolution."

**Further Tariff Reform, 1845.**

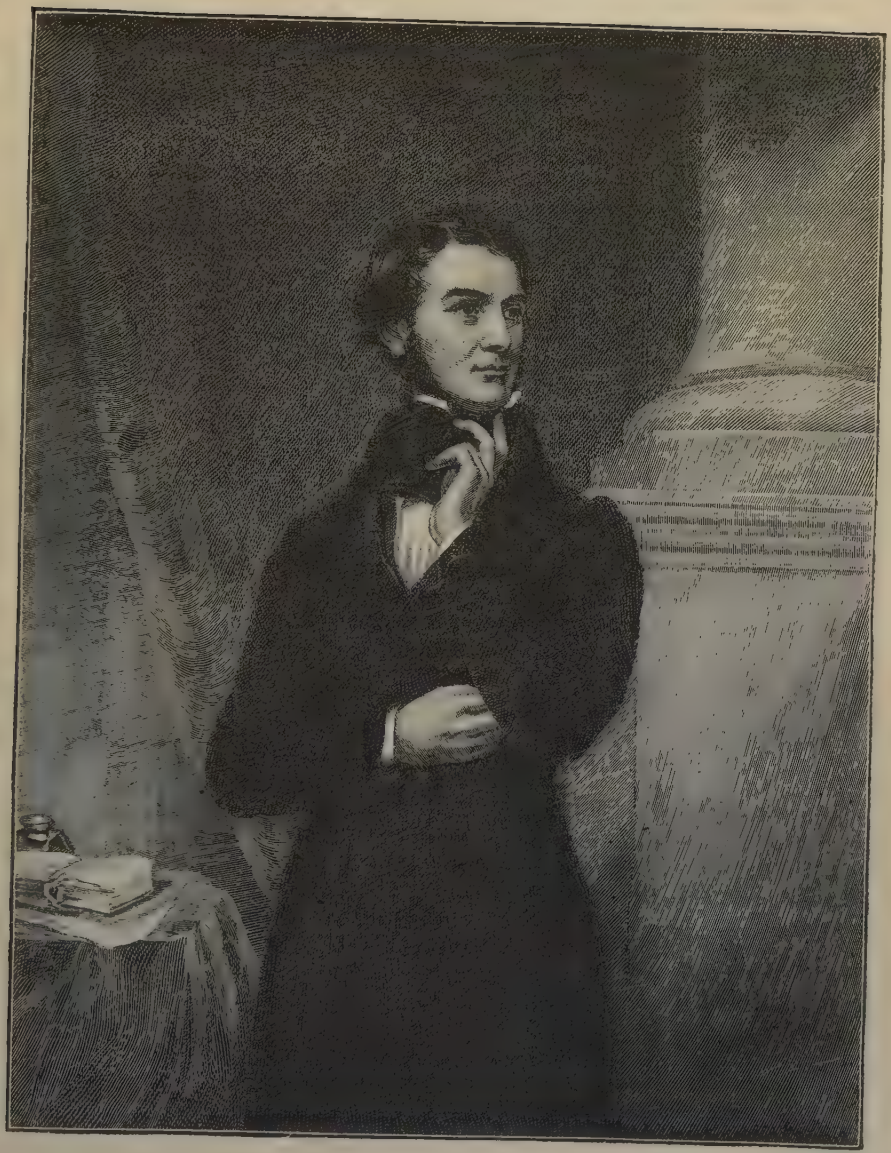
The "great agricultural interest" was at last beginning to fly, in Parliament, as well as in the country, indignant signals of distress. She was beginning to feel herself to be, in Disraeli's words, "that beauty which everybody wooed and one deluded."

On July 15th Mr. Gladstone entered into a long duel with Palmerston on the subject of Spanish Colonial sugar. Palmerston had moved a resolution that the duties on Spanish Colonial products should be assimilated to those of the most-favoured nations. Throughout the debate Mr. Gladstone showed extraordinary acuteness and knowledge, but Palmerston's summary in reply was not unfair: "An able and ingenious speech, showing deep research and great knowledge; . . . . but I must say that it is not always the best symptom of the goodness of a cause that such a long and ingenious defence is required to support it."

**Spanish Colonial Sugar.**

This speech is the last which Mr. Gladstone was to make in the House of Commons for a period of more than two years, owing to circumstances which must shortly be explained.

* Hansard, February 5th, 1845.



W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1845.

(*From the Painting by W. Bradley.*)

In this month (July, 1845) he was making plans for the recess, and wrote to his greatest friend to propose a short tour in Ireland:—

"13, Carlton House Terrace, July 23, 1845.

"MY DEAR HOPE.—Ireland is likely to find this country and Parliament so much employment for years to come, that I feel rather oppressively an obligation to try and see it with my own eyes, instead of using those of other people, according to the limited measure of my means. Now your company would be so very valuable as well as agreeable to me, that I am desirous to know whether you are at all inclined to entertain the idea of devoting the month of September, after the meeting in Edinburgh, to a working tour in Ireland with me—eschewing all grandeur, and taking little account even of scenery, compared with the purpose of looking from close quarters at the institutions for religion and education of the country, and at the character of the people. It seems ridiculous to talk of supplying the defects of second-hand information by so short a trip; but though a longer time would be much better, yet even a very contracted one does much when it is added to an habitual though indirect knowledge.—Believe me, your attached friend,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

**A Projected Tour in Ireland.**

It is much to be regretted, as Mr. Ornsby, his biographer, remarks, that other engagements prevented Hope from accepting this invitation. We are left to speculate as to the effect which such a tour might have had in hastening or retarding or altering Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy. Remarkable and, as a rule, beneficial results may generally be expected when a great statesman puts himself into direct and personal contact with conditions which he is too apt to regulate at a distance.

Having given up the Irish tour, Mr. Gladstone made his way to Germany, and seized the opportunity of paying his first visit to Dr. Döllinger. At Munich, where Döllinger lived, Mr. Gladstone stayed a week, and spent three or four hours every day with the great German theologian. It was at Baden-Baden that he heard of Newman's secession, and wrote "a few words in this day of trouble" to Manning: "Almost all I see here drives my sympathy into the Roman camp—that is, *quoad* German matters." But in spite of that and the high opinion which he had immediately formed of Döllinger, Mr. Gladstone had a keen eye for anything unstable in the condition of Rome. The English Church had her troubles, but "to see the Roman Church on the defensive against Ronge, rationalism, and thought tending towards rationalism, within its own pale, is in the nature of a corrective to that half-heartedness and despondency which is almost forced upon us at home by the contemplation of our own difficulties."*

**In Germany.**

From Baden-Baden Mr. Gladstone also wrote to his friend Hope, who was already beginning to question the Catholicity of the Church of England. The final step must be recorded later. It is enough to say that to Mr. Gladstone, who never seems himself to have wavered, the doubts of his friends caused the acutest pain.

In the autumn of 1845 events were to take place which would at once restore him to office and eject him from Parliament. For three years Peel had been a Free Trader; he was no longer prepared to resist the

* Mr. Purcell's Manning, vol. i, p. 313. The letter is dated Baden-Baden, October 20th, 1845.

extension of Free Trade to corn. The failure of the potato crop in Ireland hastened his determination. On October 31st and November 1st the question was discussed in Cabinet Council. On November 6th Peel proposed to call Parliament and announce a *modification* of the Corn Laws. This proposal was supported by only three of his colleagues—Graham, Aberdeen, and Sidney Herbert. But worse reports of the condition of the country came in, and on November 22nd Lord John Russell published his famous Edinburgh letter, in which he completely endorsed the policy of Cobden and urged his constituents—the electors of the City of London—to agitate for repeal: "The Government appear to be waiting for some excuse to give up the present Corn Laws. Let the people, by petition, by address, by remonstrance, afford them the excuse they seek."

Corn Laws: the Crisis Approaching (1845).

This letter had a remarkable effect. More of those Cabinet Councils were called which "agitated England, perplexed the sagacious Tuileries, and disturbed even the serene intelligence of the profound Metternich"; and Peel succeeded in persuading the rest of the Cabinet, with the exception of Stanley and the Duke of Buccleuch. After some little hesitation, however, Peel resigned, on the 5th December. The Queen sent for Lord John Russell, but the latter failed to form a Cabinet. On the 20th, Peel agreed to resume office. Buccleuch reconsidered his objections, and Mr. Gladstone rejoined the Government as Secretary of State for the Colonies.*

He could hardly have known, in taking this momentous step, that he was cutting himself adrift from the old Tory party. Peel no doubt hoped to avoid a serious split, and might have succeeded if the country gentlemen had remained leaderless. But the indignation against Peel had been growing ever since the Duke of Buckingham's speech (February 27th, 1845) to the Bucks Conservative Association, when, "as a country gentleman, he expressed the feelings which pervaded his bosom" on the subject of her Majesty's Ministry. But if Peel underrated the strength of the feeling against him in his own party, he made a still greater mistake in contemptuously overlooking its most brilliant member. If Disraeli had been propitiated by inclusion in the Ministry a catastrophe might possibly have been averted. The country gentlemen already felt that they had been betrayed; but they were not clever enough, or not foolish enough, to trust themselves as yet to the leadership of a political adventurer. But it was plain that an outbreak must eventually occur, although in the session of 1845 the Prime Minister had continued to get their votes in the House and their abuse out of it.

Mr. Gladstone Colonial Secretary.

The mutiny began as soon as Peel's new Cabinet was formed. The four Dukes of Newcastle, Buckingham, Richmond, and Marlborough set to work to prove that pocket boroughs and county divisions were still controllable; and they were backed by the country squires, the country parsons,

* Stanley, whom he thus succeeded, mentioned to Mr. Gladstone in December, "not confidentially," that while he disapproved of the decision of the Cabinet to propose the repeal of the Corn Laws, he meant to promote the passing of the measure. Stanley's performance at the end of the year presents a curious parallel and contrast to that of Mr. Gladstone at the beginning. The comparison is not favourable to Stanley.

and the more ignorant or subservient of the tenant farmers. At the beginning of the new year (1846) a meeting of the Nottinghamshire Agricultural Protection Association was held at Newark, and a memorial forwarded to the county members calling upon them to be worthy of the trust reposed in them by giving "the most determined opposition to Free Trade principles, and thus to represent these the undoubted opinions of your constituents." The parson who proposed the adoption of the resolution held a letter in his hand which had been written by Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Hassall, in relation to the reduction of the duty on osiers in the late alteration of the tariff. Mr. Hassall (of Shelford Manor), who then had "from twenty to thirty tons of brown rods, or osiers, which he could not sell" on account of Dutch competition, confirmed the unsatisfactory character of Mr. Gladstone's letter, and added that he had written to Lord Lincoln, another local member, on the subject, and received a response equally unpleasant. The Earl of Lincoln and the two members for Newark had been invited to attend this meeting, but had declined on various pretexts, Mr. Gladstone saying that "business and other difficulties would prevent his attendance."

**The Revolt of the Squires.**

Two seats which were immediately under the influence of the Duke of Newcastle were vacated by acceptances of office in the new Ministry. Lord Lincoln, who represented South Nottinghamshire, and Mr. Gladstone, who represented Newark, had both joined Sir Robert Peel. The old Duke chose to do what he liked with his own, and showed himself to be perfectly consistent. His son and heir had to go, as well as his son's old college friend, the hero of the great anti-Reform Bill speech in the Oxford Union Society.

**Mr. Gladstone Retires from Newark (1846).**

According to an apparently well-informed correspondent of the *Nottingham Mercury*, the feelings of the majority of the electors were in favour of Mr. Gladstone's re-election, and for ten days deputations and messages passed to and fro between Clumber, Newark, and London. Finally, however, the Duke of Newcastle, as well as Lord Winchilsea, having refused to support him, Mr. Gladstone published an address in which he disguises the real cause of his retirement as far as possible. "But," says the correspondent, "there is no doubt, if Mr. Gladstone had suffered himself to be placed in nomination, he would have been returned by a large majority, in spite of all the influence against him." But a natural loyalty towards his old political patron made it impossible for the representative to consent to oppose the wishes of the proprietor of Newark.

This chapter may conclude with the address, or rather letter of farewell, which Mr. Gladstone issued to his old constituents :—

"GENTLEMEN,—By accepting the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies, I have ceased to be your representative in Parliament.

"On several accounts I should have been peculiarly desirous at the present time of giving you an opportunity to pronounce your Constitutional judgment on my public conduct, by soliciting at your hands a renewal of the trust which I have already received from you on *five* successive occasions and held during a period of *thirteen* years.

**A Farewell Letter.**

"But, as I have good reason to believe that a candidate, * recommended to your

* John Stuart, a Q.C., of London, a *protégé* of the Duke of Newcastle, and supporter of the Corn Laws, issued his address two days later. The comments of the Whig newspapers upon the Duke's dismissal of his old nominee are well worth reading.

favour through local connection, may ask your suffrages, it becomes my very painful duty to announce to you, on that ground alone, my retirement from a position which has afforded me so much of honour and of satisfaction.

"I shall ever retain, gentlemen, happy recollections of your confidence and of your indulgence; and though I may no longer stand in any formal relation to you, I shall continue to feel a lively desire that every blessing may attend the borough and its inhabitants.

"Independently, however, of any such prospective relation, it is my duty to render to you some account of that step by which my seat has been vacated.

*Photo : Frith, Reigate.*

TOWN HALL AND MARKET SQUARE, NEWARK-UPON-TRENT.

"I regret that at the present moment I must even here make an appeal to your confidence. The obligations into which I have entered as a Minister of the Crown forbid me to do more at this time than to state in general outline the considerations which have governed me, and which I should have been prepared more fully to sustain upon again appearing before you as a candidate for re-election after the meeting of Parliament.

"The events which I had immediately to regard, when I was invited to re-enter the service of the Crown, were these: the Administration of Sir Robert Peel had retired from office; the party opposed to that Administration, and led by Lord John Russell, had endeavoured to form a Government, and the endeavour had not succeeded. On the other hand, as I am given to understand, persons favourable to unrelaxed Protection were not prepared themselves to undertake the conduct of public affairs, in conformity with the views which they entertained.

"It was in the critical juncture thus brought about that Sir Robert Peel had unhesitatingly resumed the exercise of political power.

"When invited to fill the vacancy caused by the lamented retirement of Lord Stanley,

I had to ask myself the question whether it was to be desired, on account of the exigencies of the general welfare as they stood, that the Queen's Government should receive support. Gentlemen, I judged that such was the case, and therefore felt it was for those who believed the Government was acting according to the demands of public duty, to testify that belief, however limited their sphere might be, by their co-operation. Nor is there anything I could so much have coveted, except for the cause to which I have adverted, as the opportunity of vindicating before you the judgment at which I have arrived, and of inviting you to record your approval of it by your votes. That vindication would have rested, and whenever and wherever it may be offered it will rest, upon no merely apologetic plea, but upon the assertion that I have acted in obedience to the clear and imperious calls of public obligation, and with the purpose, which I have ever sought to follow, of promoting the permanent interests of the community and of all the classes of which it is composed

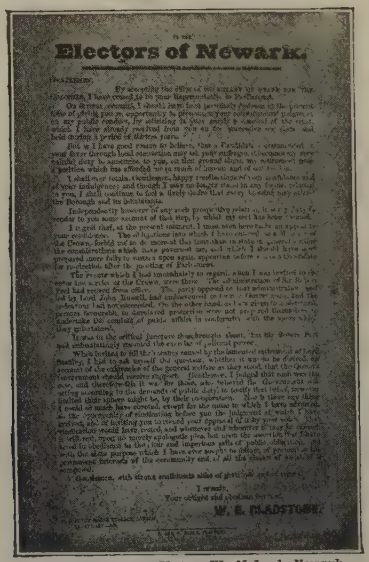
"Gentlemen, with strong sentiments alike of gratitude and regret, I remain, your obliged and obedient servant

"W. E. GLADSTONE.

"13, Carlton House Terrace, London. 5th January, 1846."

This retirement from Newark marks the close of the first period of transition in Mr. Gladstone's political life. The Protectionist Tory is now transformed into a Free Trade Conservative or Peelite.

F. W. HIRST.



To the
**Electors of Newark.**

*Photo; W. McLeod, Newark.*

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# CHAPTER VII.

## MR. GLADSTONE IN SOCIETY.

Mr. Gladstone's Courtesy and Dignity—His Deference to Rank—His Demeanour towards the Queen—A Torrent of Talk—A Capricious Sense of Humour—His Favourite Topics—His Distaste for Physical Science—As a Host and as a Guest—His Powers of Observation—His Love of Beauty—His Relations with his Colleagues—A Formidable Personality—The Inner Life—His Inability to Recognise Faces—Taking Mr. Armitstead and Mr. John Morley for Interlopers—Entertaining Children—"Drawn" by Russell Lowell—All Things to all Men—The Simplicity of his Personal Tastes.

WE are indebted to Mr. George Russell for the following sketch of Mr. Gladstone in his relations with society :—

In looking back upon Mr. Gladstone as I knew him in society, the characteristic which first occurs to my recollection is his courtesy. It was one of his most engaging gifts, and accounted in no small degree for his power of attracting the regard of young men and undistinguished people generally. To all such he was polite to the point of deference, yet never condescending. His manners to all alike—young and old, rich and poor—were the ceremonious manners of the old school, and his demeanour towards ladies was a model of chivalrous propriety. His social bearing was happily described by a political opponent who was his neighbour in the country :— **His Courtesy.**

"Mr. Gladstone has been a statesman, an orator, a theologian, a writer; he has been revered, and dreaded, and loved by many generations. But to the young he was pre-eminently an English Gentleman. In public an unsparing, but a punctilious and chivalrous, opponent; in private a country neighbour who inspired awe, that merged into ease only to merge again into awe, as, with unaffected simplicity, he sank the differences of age and honours in forthright companionship. To the young neighbour he would talk of his trees, of his books, of his ivories; to an Eton boy, of the reach above Boveney Weir, of the style of rowing, and of the slang in vogue at Eton seventy years since; but to each with faultless courtesy, and of all things with unfailing memory, he would so discourse that the young Tory and the Eton boy drove home with a new pride and delight in the fact that they too were Englishmen."

Scarcely less noticeable than Mr. Gladstone's courtesy was his dignity. I think that, even if one had not known the fact, one would on first encountering him have felt that one was in the presence of a very great man. He had the peculiar stateliness of bearing which nowadays no one who is less than seventy seems capable of even imitating. He carried himself with a singular erectness, and his gestures and movements were, like his dress and pronunciation, curiously old-fashioned. "*Vieille école bonne école*," said Major Pendennis, and, whatever may be thought of the old school in regard to matters of greater moment, it certainly knew how to comport itself on occasions of public or social ceremony. **His Dignity.**

A characteristically old-fashioned part of Mr. Gladstone's nature, and one which displayed itself most conspicuously in his social demeanour,

was his feeling about Rank. In its highest relations this feeling was reinforced by his views about the office and functions of the Sovereign; and, on the plane immediately below the highest, propinquity to the Throne elicited Mr. Gladstone's profound respect. But far beyond the region of royalty, Rank always received from Mr. Gladstone an old-fashioned homage. When he was examined as a witness in the Lincoln Divorce-Case,* he was asked if he and Mrs. Gladstone were acquainted with Lady Lincoln. His reply was, "Yes, allowing for the difference of station, we were well acquainted with her ladyship."† Pomp, state, and ceremonious living, though he utterly repudiated them for himself, seemed to him natural and becoming for persons in great position. He counted it to Lord Randolph Churchill for righteousness that, being a duke's son, he betook himself seriously to the pursuit of politics. I once was telling him of some curious economies practised by my father when he was a cornet in the Blues, and Mr. Gladstone, warmly commending his self-control, added, "And he the Duke of Bedford's son!' In speaking of political candidatures, he once told me that a lord was worth a dozen of a commoner in any popular competition; and he greatly lamented the abolition of the Nobleman's Gown which in the Oxford of his youth had marked the privileges of higher birth. This old-fashioned sense of the claims of Rank had a curious effect on his bearing in society. In virtue of his parentage he had the infinitesimal rank of a baronet's younger son. Political office had long ago made him a Privy Councillor. But our amazing system of precedence gives no rank to the Prime Minister as such; and when, as an octogenarian Premier, he was ruling England for the fourth time, Mr. Gladstone's place in society was behind a baron's eldest son. Of course this absurdity was always rectified by the lady of the house, who, letting her other guests go in front, kept him for her own companion in the march to the dining-room. But when dinner was over, and the other guests courteously stood back to allow of Mr. Gladstone's exit, he sternly refused to suffer such a violation of precedence. "Pray go on, Mr. Gladstone." said the Duke of S——. "I will stand here till I am turned into a pillar of salt sooner than go out before you," thundered Mr. Gladstone in reply.

His Deference to Rank.

An absurd story used to be current among credulous people that Mr. Gladstone was habitually uncivil to the Queen. His views about Rank being what I have just described, it would indeed have been curious if he had made a departure from his usual practice in the case of a lady who was also his Sovereign. And, as a matter of fact, the story was so ridiculously wide of the mark that it deserves mention only because, in itself false, it is founded on a truth. "I," said the Duke of Wellington, "have no small talk, and Peel has no manners." Mr. Gladstone had manners but no small talk. He was so consumed by zeal for great subjects that he left out of account the possibility that they might not interest other people. He paid to everyone, and not least to ladies, the compliment of assuming that they were on his own intellectual level, engrossed in the subjects which engrossed him, and furnished with at least as much information as would enable them to follow and to understand him. Hence the genesis of that absurd story about his demeanour to the Queen.

His Demeanour towards the Queen.

* See *post*, p. 347. † See p. 349 (footnote).

"He speaks to me as if I were a public meeting," is a complaint which is said to have proceeded from illustrious lips. That most successful of all courtiers, the astute Lord Beaconsfield, used to engage her Majesty in conversation about water-colour drawing and the third-cousinships of German princes. Mr. Gladstone harangued her about the polity of the Hittites, or the harmony between the Athanasian Creed and Homer. The Queen, perplexed and uncomfortable, tried to make a digression—addressed a remark to a daughter, or proffered biscuit to a begging terrier. Mr. Gladstone restrained himself with an effort till the princess had answered or the dog had sat down, and then promptly resumed: "I was about to say——" Meanwhile the flood had gathered force by delay, and when it burst forth again it carried all before it.

No image, except that of a flood, can convey the notion of Mr. Gladstone's table-talk on a subject which interested him keenly—its rapidity, its volume, its splash and dash, its frequent beauty, its striking effects, the amount of varied matter which it brought with it, the hopelessness of trying to withstand it, the unexpectedness of its onrush, the subdued but fertilised condition of the subjected area over which it had passed. The bare mention of a topic which interested him opened the floodgates and submerged a province. But the torrent did not wait for the invitation. If not invited, it came of its own accord; headlong, overwhelming, sweeping all before it, and gathering fresh force from every obstacle which it encountered on its course. Such was Mr. Gladstone's table-talk. Conversation, strictly so called, it was not. He asked questions when he wanted information, and answered them copiously when asked by others. But there was no give-and-take, no meeting you half way, no paying you back in your own conversational coin. He discoursed, he lectured, he harangued. But if a subject was started which did not interest him it fell flat. He made no attempt to return the ball.

**A Torrent of Talk.**

Although, when he was amused, his amusement was intense and long sustained, his sense of humour was highly capricious. When a story had tickled him, he would ask, like a child, to have it repeated, although he remembered it in every detail; but it was impossible for even his most intimate friends to guess beforehand what would amuse him and what would not; and he had a most disconcerting habit of taking a comic story in grim earnest, and arguing some farcical fantasy as if it were a serious proposition of law or logic. Once, speaking in his presence at a public luncheon, I had the honour of proposing Mrs. Gladstone's health. I referred to her as his "better half," and I reminded my hearers that, according to the ancient Greeks, "the half was more than the whole." Some hours later Mr. Gladstone suddenly asked me, "Where did the ancient Greeks say that the half was more than the whole?" Unluckily, I had forgotten both Hesiod and The Republic, and was forced to admit that I could not remember my authority for the saying. "I am not at all surprised," said Mr. Gladstone. "Do you suppose that the Greeks—the most logical race of people that the world has ever seen—committed themselves to a proposition so preposterous as that the half is more than the whole? If the half is more than the whole, the half of the half must be more than the whole of the half; and so you are indefinitely conducted into absurdities."

**A Capricious Sense of Humour.**

A clergyman in the north of Ireland wrote me an indignant letter about the Affirmation Bill of 1883, and, turning in his wrath from the demerits of the Bill to the crimes of its author, he said, "Before the Irish Church was robbed, I was nominated to the Deanery of Tuam, but, Mr. Disraeli resigning, I was defrauded of my just right by Mr. Gladstone, and my wife, the only surviving child of an earl, was sadly disappointed; but there is a just Judge above." This letter I showed to Mr. Gladstone, but it elicited no smile. Handing it back to me, he asked with indignant emphasis, "What does the fellow mean by quoting an engagement of my predecessor's as binding on me?"

But while Mr. Gladstone's sense of humour was thus capricious and incalculable, his sense of truth, of honour, of uprightness had always to be reckoned with, in even the most trivial narratives. Nothing funnier could be imagined than the discomfiture of a story-teller who had fondly thought to entertain by an anecdote which depended for its point upon some trait of baseness, cynicism, or sharp practice. He found his tale received in dead silence, looked up wonderingly for an explanation, and saw that what was intended to amuse had only disgusted. Mr. Browning once told Mr. Gladstone a highly characteristic story of Disraelitish duplicity, and for all reply heard the indignant question, "Do you call that amusing, Browning? *I call it devilish.*"

The topics about which Mr. Gladstone talked were indeed too many for enumeration. Outside the professional subject of politics (about which he habitually said little except as regards the remote past), theology, Homer, Dante, hymnology, poetry, novels, music and woodcraft recur immediately to the recollection. But what interested me most keenly was to find the number of obscure topics—some serious and some trivial—about which he had apparently read and thought for years, though he might mention them only once in a decade. Examples of what I mean in the trivial order were such questions as these: "How many books about epitaphs are there in the English language?" "Do you consider that there is more to eat in a boiled egg or a poached one? This is a test-question with me." In the serious order was the sudden disclosure of his belief about Immortality. Never shall I forget the hour when I sat with him in the park at Hawarden, while a thunderstorm was gathering over our heads, and he, all unheeding, poured forth, in those organ-tones of profound conviction, his belief that the human soul is not necessarily indestructible, but that immortality is the gift of God in Christ to the believer. The impression of that discourse will not be effaced until the tablets of memory are finally blotted.

**His Favourite Topics.**

Broadly speaking, there is only one department of human knowledge for which I never heard him express the slightest fondness, and that is a large one—physical science. He seemed to have something of the old theological view that science was wicked, or, at any rate, uncanny. He seemed fairly startled by the prospect opened by the discovery of the Röntgen rays. He was sceptical about some of the best-established conclusions in medicine; and had something of a mediæval faith in herbs and "simples." An eyewitness described how intensely he was bored when a friend took him round the University Workshops

**His Distaste for Physical Science.**

at Cambridge, and tried to interest him in wheels and circular saws. An eminent man of science told me that he had once arranged to take him to Greenwich Observatory to see a celebrated eclipse; and that, when the night turned out foggy and the trip was abandoned, he showed as much delight as a schoolboy excused from a disagreeable lesson. But, indeed, if his intellectual interest had embraced physical science, its scope would have been supernatural, because it would have embraced all human knowledge.

As a host, Mr. Gladstone was, in Scriptural phrase, given to hospitality; and he received his guests—more especially such as could by any stretch be called old friends—with "that honest joy which warms more than dinner or wine." He carried compliance with the tastes of his guests to the extremest point; suffered tobacco (which he loathed) to be smoked in his dining-room, and even, when the Prince of Wales dined with him, went through the form of putting a cigar between his lips. As a guest, he was perfect. No one made so little fuss; no one so easily accommodated himself to new ways and surroundings; no one put his host and hostess so quickly and so completely at their ease. He was indeed a stickler for punctuality; but, this point secured, he was the most facile of visitors. He had a keen faculty of enjoyment, great appreciation of civility and attention, and a nature completely unspoilt by success and prominence and praise. It was pretty to see his frank pleasure when a friend, however undistinguished or even incompetent, paid him a sincere compliment—for instance, on an unusually triumphant speech. His cheek flushed like a boy's, and his onyx-eyes beamed, as he said, quite naturally, "I am glad you thought so," or, "It is very kind of you to say so." Another engaging trait was his loyalty to Auld Lang Syne, and I never saw him so much moved by a personal compliment as he was by a tribute from a contemporary to a certain grey Arabian mare which, fifty years before, he used to ride in Hyde Park.

**As Host.**

**As a Guest.**

If he was fond of receiving praise, he was certainly not less fond of bestowing it. I cannot conceive that at any period, or in any imaginable circumstance, he ever flattered; but where he thought it justly bestowed, his praise was generous, eager, and abundant. *Where he thought it justly bestowed*—that was an essential condition. He never could be induced to praise what he did not admire. He would sometimes soften the process by saying, "I should like to hear that passage again," or "I will look at the picture more carefully"; and I well remember the laborious courtesy with which he once tried to find something complimentary to say about a Gothic summer-house of stucco and blue glass. But, when pressed for his opinion, he gave it emphatically; and I am sorry to recall his unfavourable verdict on Tennyson's Ode to Virgil, and Charles Wesley's "Jesu, Lover of my soul."

It would probably not have been suspected by those who casually met Mr. Gladstone in society and saw his eager absorption in his own topics that he was a close observer of what went on around him. It is true that he was not good at remembering the faces of mere acquaintances. Meek followers in the House of Commons, who had sacrificed health, money, time, toil, and sometimes conscience, to his cause, turned,

**His Powers of Observation.**

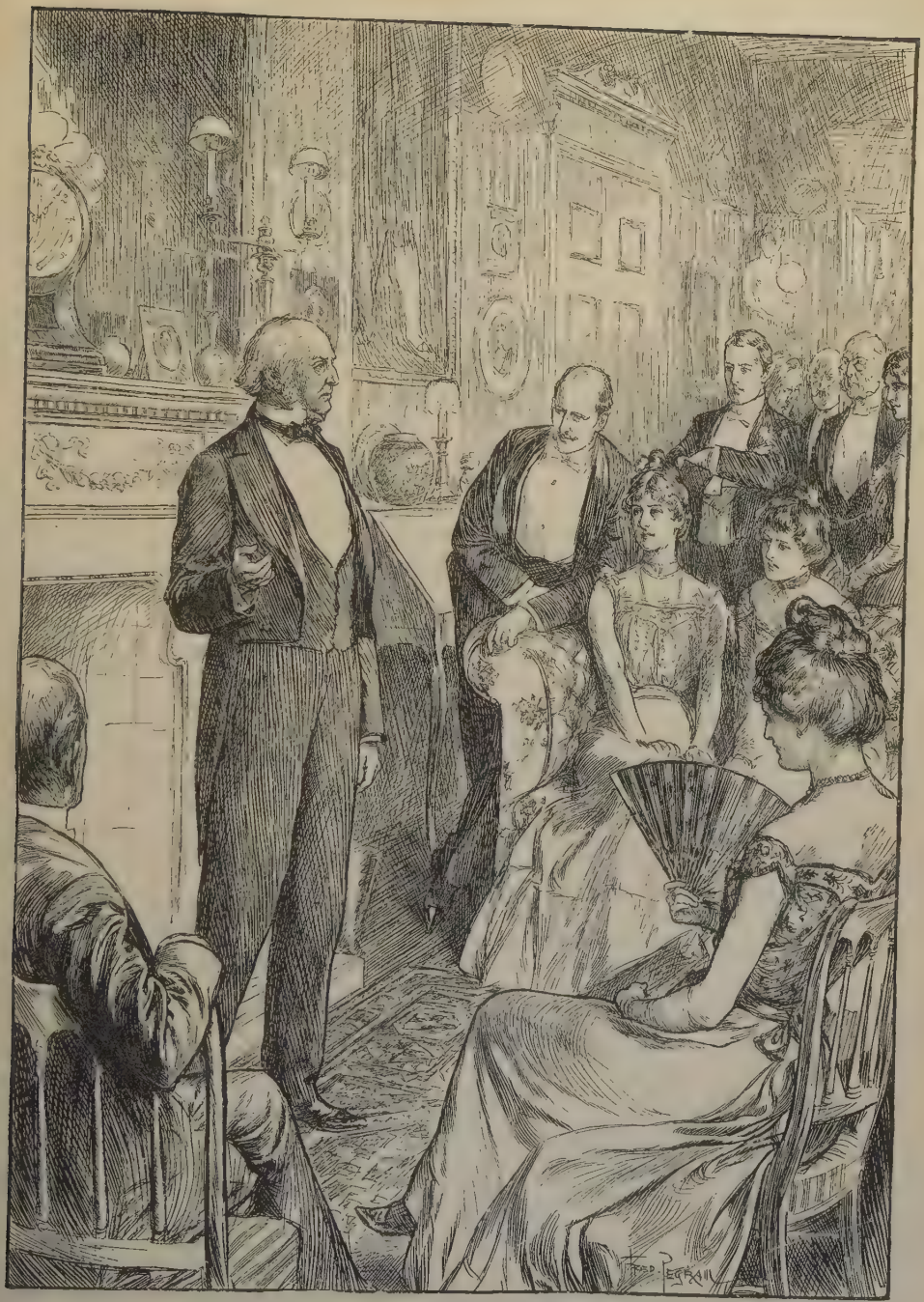
like the crushed worm when they found that he sternly ignored their presence in the Lobby, and, if forced to speak to them, called them by inappropriate names. But when he was brought into close contact with people, or felt the least interest in them, he observed them—their appearance, their traits, their ways—with startling minuteness.

Love of Beauty.

His love of beauty was, of course, one of his most conspicuous characteristics, and beauty, in its highest form of human nature, made a powerful appeal to his sympathies. In women the gift which specially attracted him was what, for want of a better word, one must call Womanliness; and he had his list of the handsomest men he had ever known, as exact and complete as his list of the greatest preachers or the most gifted speakers. When his interest in a man or woman was aroused, he had a keen eye, not only for general effect, but for details. He greatly disliked beards and moustaches, not only or chiefly because they impeded utterance, but because they concealed one of the most characteristic features of the human face, and also because they harboured the fumes of tobacco. "Surely —— must smoke very bad cigars," he once said of a colleague; "his beard is absolutely an offence." Of another: "—— has a great many merits, but not the merit of looking young for his years." After he had addressed the Union at Oxford in 1890, he was asked if he had noticed any special difference between the undergraduates of the present day and those of his youth. He replied instantly, "Yes—their dress. I was told that I had in my audience many of the wealthiest and best-connected men in the University, and there wasn't one of them whom I couldn't have dressed from top to toe for five pounds." On a lady who had sate by him at dinner he pronounced the stern judgment that she was greedy, because she eschewed mutton and fed upon kickshaws. Greediness, indeed, was a fault specially abhorrent to a man whose wholesome appetite was constantly and completely satisfied with roast beef and rice-pudding, Stilton cheese, and two glasses of port. All elaborate or unknown dishes he regarded with an amusing mixture of fear and dislike, and to eat raw oysters was, in his judgment, sheer barbarism.

His Relations with his Colleagues.

It was one of Mr. Gladstone's social peculiarities that he did not cultivate the society of his colleagues. To one or two of them indeed he was warmly attached; but, as a rule, he kept his personal friendships and his official relations quite distinct. It has been said that men who have only worked together have only half lived together; and in this sense Mr. Gladstone only half lived with his colleagues. Though, in official dealings, he was accessible and frank, he did not feel bound, merely because a man was in his Government, to cultivate intimacy with him when business was over. A member of his first Cabinet told me that he had never been invited into the chief's house, except to the full-dress dinner, or as a unit in an assembly of the Liberal party. Probably this habit of aloofness helps to account for the notable fact that Mr. Gladstone has left behind him no school of Gladstonian politicians. He was formed by Peel, and inherited his traditions; but, so far as his colleagues are concerned, he formed no one and transmitted nothing.



MR. GLADSTONE RECITING.

It was when politics were banished, and when he was completely at home among men who shared his interests in other fields, that Mr. Gladstone became peculiarly delightful. He was, beyond most men, obliging, encouraging, and accommodating, and would readily respond to a request for some special contribution to the pleasantness of the evening. Unluckily, I am not old enough to have heard him sing "Camp Town Races," as described by Lord Malmesbury in his Diary. But in my time he was always ready to tell a story or recite a poem which his host might ask for. His story-telling was really dramatic. I remember with equal vividness the solemn roll of his voice as he declaimed the last stanza of Scott's version of *Dies Iræ*, and the twinkling enjoyment with which he repeated some grotesque verses of Canning's, in which the language was ransacked for rhymes to "breeches."

Yes, when life was going well and he was in the right vein, he was unsurpassable in pleasantness, facility, geniality, and good comradeship; and yet all the while there was something formidable. I felt a genuine and wholesome awe of his downrightness, his thoroughness, his argumentative force. I cannot conceive that any human being ever took a liberty with him in private intercourse, though, I am sorry to say, I have seen it done in Parliament. The "vulnerable temper and impetuous moods" which he long ago ascribed to himself, though disciplined by the most splendid self-control, made themselves seen and felt, and, by a curious influence, checked the expression of opinions which he did not share. An instance may be allowed. I was once dining with a party of eight or ten men, of whom Mr. Gladstone was one. He began praising the scheme of a Channel Tunnel; one man agreed loudly; no one expressed dissent; and Mr. Gladstone said he was pleased to find so complete an agreement. Personally I was opposed to the tunnel, and I suspected that some of the others shared my view. I thereupon proposed to take a division, when it appeared that only Mr. Gladstone and one other favoured the tunnel, and that all the rest were opposed to it. Yet they had been awed into silence, which had been interpreted as consent.

**A Formidable Personality.**

But something more remains to be described. The permanent power by which this great man held his friends awe-struck and spell-bound was the sense, from time to time borne in upon them with startling suddenness, that in the gayest moments of social intercourse—amid the most distracting turmoils of contentious occupation—his inner life was lived unbrokenly with God. It has been my privilege to know great saints in various communions, but they have been either ministers of religion by profession or recluses from the world by choice. Here was a man who enjoyed his human pleasures with the keenest zest, and fought his human battles with the most masterful energy; and yet all the while was dwelling (to use a phrase of his own) "in the inner court of the sanctuary whereof the walls are not built with hands."

**The Inner Life.**

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Mr. George Russell, in the foregoing reminiscences of Mr. Gladstone in society, has left little for anyone else to add. The picture he has

drawn shows the great man in his various moods—always delightful in his personal courtesy, sometimes gay and buoyant, at other times charged with an over-mastering and passionate sense of the gravity of life, and always leaving upon those who were brought in contact with him the sense of a great and formidable personality. Men trod lightly in his presence, as the Swiss guides tell us we must do on certain of the higher passes of the Alps. There was always, when with him, the consciousness that an avalanche might suddenly thunder down upon one's head.

That inability to recognise the faces of his acquaintances, and even of his friends, to which Mr. Russell has alluded, was a serious drawback to Mr. Gladstone in public life. Many of his supporters openly resented the fact that he did not know them in the street, or even in the Lobby. They thought that he "cut" them deliberately. Mr. Gladstone was absolutely incapable of this form of rudeness. It was his misfortune, not his fault, that he had not that quickness of vision which enables some men to recognise again any face that they have once seen. "I am unfortunately not able to recognise faces," he once said to me, "but I always remember names. If only I am told the name of a man who is brought to me, then it is all right." And this I found to be quite true, even in my own limited intercourse with him.

**Faces and Names.**

MR. GEORGE ARMITSTEAD.

His devoted friend, Mr. Armitstead, who did so much for his comfort and happiness in his closing years, has told an amusing story with regard to this defective vision of Mr. Gladstone's. One day Mr. Armitstead and Mr. John Morley arrived at Hawarden Castle on a visit. If there were two men in the world whose faces were at that time familiar to Mr. Gladstone they were Mr. Morley and Mr. Armitstead. On reaching the Castle they learned that its master was out in the park, and the day being fine they strolled out to meet him. As it happened, they did not find him until they reached a private portion of the grounds, to which strangers were not admitted. As they were hastening towards him they saw that he was also coming to meet them with a somewhat stern expression upon his face. No smile of welcome caused his features to relax; he eyed them severely, and was evidently about to question them as to their presence in the private grounds, when one of them spoke and revealed their identity. Although close to them he had not recognised their familiar faces. I tell this little incident because it may carry comfort to some who have imagined themselves slighted by Mr. Gladstone in former times.

Amid many delightful pictures of him in social scenes there is one which stands out in special prominence. Mrs. Gladstone had given a

large garden party one day at Dollis Hill, the pleasant country house where they spent several summers after 1886. There was a brilliant company of guests wandering under the trees, chatting or partaking of refreshments. When Mr. Gladstone had welcomed everybody, and had enjoyed his usual special chat with Lord Acton, he went to a table on the lawn where some very young children were taking tea under the charge of a governess. Here he found a seat, and instantly plunging into conversation with them, made that table the merriest spot at Dollis Hill for the rest of the afternoon. The older people naturally kept apart; they could not listen to the cries of delight and bursts of laughter which came from the children without feeling that they were being entertained by one who had himself the heart of a little child.

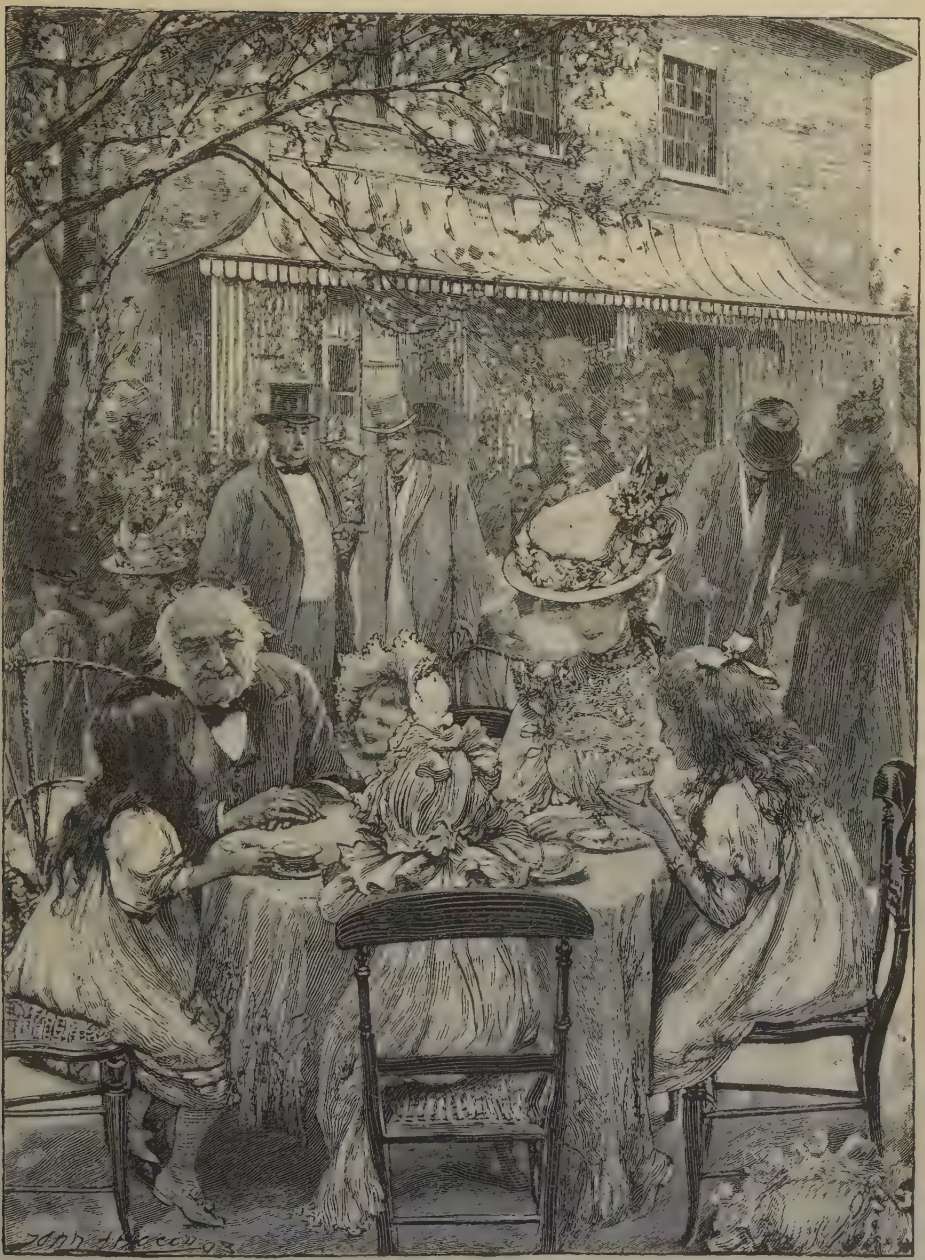
A Garden Party at Dollis Hill.

Once upon a time it was the lot of the present writer to see Mr. Gladstone at the social board in a very different mood from this. The dinner-party was a small one, but in addition to Mr. Gladstone it comprised one other very eminent man, Mr. Russell Lowell. Everybody anticipated with delight the conversation of two such men. But somehow or other, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowell did not "hit it off." It was in the days when the Home Rule controversy was most bitter, and by an unlucky chance the question of Ireland was raised. It was not political but artistic Ireland that was touched upon. Mr. Lowell was mildly sarcastic at the expense of the Irish people. "What had they done in art? Had they ever done anything at all?" and so forth. It was evident that he meant to "draw" the illustrious Englishman, and "draw" him he did, with a vengeance. For a time, indeed, Mr. Gladstone kept himself under restraint; but at last the sarcasms of Lowell at the expense of the Irish people moved him beyond endurance, and suddenly the avalanche fell. "What has Ireland done for art, you ask me, Lowell?" he thundered forth, striking the table as he spoke, as though it had been the familiar box at the House of Commons. "What has Ireland done for art? If you will allow me I will tell you:" and suddenly we heard poured forth in vehement and almost passionate speech a series of statements so sweeping and so strong that they fairly staggered those of us who had no acquaintance with the subject. Ireland, Mr. Gladstone affirmed, had done great things for art before the artistic days of Rome or Greece. Lowell, still provokingly cool, said, "I have never heard of these things? What are they?" Again the avalanche fell, and with such force that a very young lady at the table turned to her next neighbour in alarm and said, "They are not quarrelling, I hope?"

Mr. Gladstone and Russell Lowell.

Truly Mr. Gladstone was a man of many moods. Yet as one looks back, the mood which seems to have been most constant in his social intercourse was one of a gentle and fascinating courtesy, and a manifest desire to make things pleasant for all with whom he was brought in contact. He would talk to each man of the subject in which that man was most deeply interested, and would pay him the compliment of asking him for information on that particular subject. To the journalist he would talk of the newspapers of the day with a frankness that was sometimes rather disconcerting. "The ——— is a very good paper," he said once to a journalist at the dinner-table, "it is one of the papers I like to read." Now the ——— was

All Things to All Men.



A GARDEN PARTY AT DOLLIS HILL.

a paper which had for years been in deadly opposition to Mr. Gladstone himself. "Yes," he continued, "Mr. M——" (the editor of the paper) "is a very able man. He knows what he is about. I always like to see what he has to say upon a subject; and whenever I read a bad leading article in the ——, I say to myself, 'Now Mr. M—— must be taking a holiday.'"

To the doctor he would talk in the same fashion of old physicians, old theories of medicine, old remedies, or the practical hygiene of to-day; to the author he spoke of books, and to the theologian of theology. But a man did not need to be author or theologian or politician to engage his courteous attention. Once at a dinner which would have been a very dull one but for his presence, Mr. Gladstone, after delighting the majority of the company by his brilliant talk, turned to the host, who was sitting in silence, and apparently feeling himself out of the conversational circle. There was one question, however, on which the opinion of this gentleman was as good as that of any other man. That was the question of port. Mr. Gladstone knew this, and in a moment he had destroyed his host's apparent feeling of isolation by engaging him in a discussion upon the great port vintages of the century.

As Mr. Russell has told us in his reminiscences, Mr. Gladstone's personal tastes were extraordinarily simple. Made dishes were his abhorrence. He would never touch anything that came from the interior of an animal, such as kidneys or sweetbread. The plainer the fare the better it suited him. Any dish the composition of which he did not know he regarded with positive repugnance. All this must have made the constant dining-out of the London season something of a trial to him. Yet he enjoyed social intercourse with his fellows so much, and found so great a relaxation and stimulus in meeting friends, or even strangers, at a dinner-table, that at the busiest periods of his life he was a regular diner-out. House of Commons business alone sufficed to make him break a dinner-engagement. It may be said with perfect truth that for quite half a century his name was more potent than that of any other man—save, perhaps, the evanescent lion of the moment—when offered as an attraction at a dinner party. There were few people, indeed, whether they agreed with him or not in politics, who did not find an invitation "to meet Mr. Gladstone" irresistible. Thus for the whole period of his public career the social side of Mr. Gladstone's life was hardly less conspicuous than his public life. He drew to himself almost as much attention at the dinner-table as in the House of Commons.

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# CHAPTER VIII.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS A PEELITE—1846-1859.

A Period of Opportunism—The Corn Laws: Peel's Conversion—Mr. Gladstone without a Seat—Recalling a Governor—A Flirtation with Scarborough—Elected for Oxford University—Roman Catholics and Jews—Palmerston and Gladstone—Church Rates—The Navigation Laws—Canada and Home Rule—The Lincoln Divorce—Domestic Sorrows—The Gorham Judgment—Unshaken Loyalty to the Church—The Secession of Manning and Hope—Mr. Gladstone's Estimate of Hope—The Case of Don Pacifico: A Duel between Palmerston and Gladstone—Death of Peel—The Neapolitan Horrors—Sir James Lacaita's Recollections—Mr. Gladstone Appeals to the Civilised World—The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—Protectionist Activity—The Peelites Coalesce with the Whigs—Gladstone Tears Disraeli's Budget to Pieces—The Aberdeen Ministry—Mr. Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer—Trouble Brewing in the East—The Paper Duty—Drifting into War with Russia—University Reform—The Government Defeated—Mr. Gladstone Resigns and Works for Peace—A Criticism of "Maud"—Relations with Lord Aberdeen—Civil Service Reform—Northcote Seeks and Finds a Leader—The Case of the Lorcha *Arrow*—Palmerston's Victory in the Country—Mr. Gladstone's Opposition to Bethell's Divorce Bill—His Rules of Policy in the East—Lord Derby's Ministry—Mr. Gladstone's Economic Progress—His Mission to the Ionian Islands—About to "find Himself."

IF the political period upon which we are embarking is the least satisfactory of those into which Mr. Gladstone's career naturally divides itself, it must be said that the times are more to blame than the man. The loosening of party ties had created a spirit of opportunism and intrigue which drove principles into the study and politics on to the platform. Mr. Gladstone has been described as an opportunist with a conscience. During the coming thirteen years this qualification was to prove a serious obstacle to his success; and a rival who was less encumbered with scruples achieved a higher degree of consistency and mounted with more rapidity up the ladder of political success.

It must not be supposed that statesmen on either side of the House were theoretically opposed to the abolition of the Corn Laws. In fact, they had only been prevented from acting earlier by the immense strength of the landed interest. The publicists had already been converted when the Anti-Corn Law League converted the country. Whately once said that "before long, political economists of some sort or other must govern the world"; and, so far as England was concerned, the advent of Peel, Graham, and Gladstone to power in 1841 quickly proved the truth of the prediction. Already, on December 15th, 1842, Lord Spencer, discussing the Corn Laws with Greville, thought "Peel must be conscious that in the end they must go." **The Corn Laws.**

Mr. Gladstone has spoken of Peel's lack of foresight as partly explaining the suddenness of his political changes; and it certainly is difficult to believe that when Peel denounced Roman Catholic Emancipation in 1828, he could have foreseen that he would have to introduce it in 1829, or that when, in 1842, he rejected the reduction of the duty on

corn to eight shillings, he contemplated the necessity for its complete abolition four years later. But Lord Aberdeen frankly maintained the paradox. "I believe," he said in a conversation recorded by his friend Nassau Senior, "that in 1828, and long before 1828, he foresaw that Catholic Emancipation must be granted; and he said to me, after making his Protectionist speech in 1842, that it was the last time that he would speak against Free Trade." And when Senior objected that this was to defend Peel's intelligence at the expense of his honesty, Lord Aberdeen answered: "A Prime Minister is not a free agent. To break up a Government, to renounce all the good that you hoped to do, and leave imperfect all the good that you have done, to hand over power to persons whose objects or whose measures you disapprove, even merely to alienate and politically to injure your friends, is no slight matter. All this, however, Peel was perfectly willing to do as soon as it appeared to him absolutely necessary. His fault was not that he refused to make the sacrifice, but that he delayed it to the last moment." But was the sacrifice necessary? Surely the mistake which was made by Sir Robert Peel upon these two occasions was not so much the delay in making public a change of policy as the reserve which withheld, not perhaps from his colleagues, but from his leading supporters in the country, the gradual process of conviction that was going on in his mind, thus endangering his party and destroying its solidarity.

**Peel's Conversion.**

**His Mistake.**

A CORN-LAW CARICATURE PUBLISHED IN 1846.

In truth, when once the reform of the tariff had been undertaken in an anti-Protectionist spirit, the repeal of the Corn Laws was only a matter of time. Mr. Gladstone has himself accurately described that repeal as not an isolated measure, but "one of the greatest branches of the large and complex system of legislation which has distinguished a portion of my lifetime, reaching from about the year 1840 to about the year 1865." *

On the other hand Mr. Gladstone never forgot nor failed to remind others of that great work of agitation, or rather of national education, which, directed and inspired by Richard Cobden and John Bright, finally made the movement for repeal more formidable, even to a Tory Minister,

* Speech at Cardiff, July 6th, 1889.

ANOTHER CORN-LAW CARICATURE—"THE NEW CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME."

(*From the Cartoon by H. B., published in* 1845.)

Representing the Duke of Wellington (Pantaloon) on left and Sir J. Graham (Clown) on right watching with evident approbation the Free Trade Evolutions of Mr. Gladstone (Columbine) and Sir R. Peel (Harlequin). Lord John Russell is seen stealing off in disgust on the left.

than the counter terrors of the landlords: "When the Corn Laws were repealed, Sir Robert Peel, on that memorable day, did justice to the authors of the repeal. They were not the aristocracy of this country. They were not even, according to him, the Ministers of the day. It was the plain, persuasive, convincing eloquence of Cobden that had brought about the change." *

Without a Seat, 1846.

Mr. Gladstone was Secretary of State for the Colonies for six months. He had given up his seat for Newark, as we have seen, and was unable to find another. Monckton Milnes, in a letter of May 15th, commented upon this prolonged divorce of an important Minister from Parliament: "Gladstone has not yet got a seat in Parliament, and I fancy the Colonies cannot much longer like to go on unrepresented—a Secretary of State out of Parliament for four months of the session, and with no Under-Secretary in Parliament, is an anomaly even in these days." It would be impossible now. But it is difficult to think of Mr. Gladstone as the author and abettor of a grave constitutional anomaly. It was unfortunate for Sir Robert Peel that his best financial lieutenant was thus precluded from taking part in the debates on the Corn Law Repeal Bill, for help was sorely needed against the bitter obstruction of Bentinck and the dashing attacks of Disraeli. Otherwise the Bill itself was a simple enough measure, and hardly required those special aptitudes which Mr. Gladstone had acquired and practised at the Board of Trade. At the end of June the Bill had passed its third reading in the House of Lords. At the same time the Government was defeated by an "unholy" alliance of Protectionists, Irishmen, Radicals, and Whigs on the second reading of an Irish Coercion Bill. Sir Robert Peel made way for Lord John Russell, and thus Mr. Gladstone was released from the responsibilities of office.

Unfortunately for himself, however, he had left an opening for his enemies in the future—and it must be remembered that at this time Mr. Gladstone was exceedingly unpopular except in the comparatively small circle of his personal friends and political, or rather ecclesiastical, adherents. "The case of Sir Eardley Wilmot" belongs to the history of Tasmania, or Van Diemen's Land, as it was then generally called, an island at that time rich in the number rather than in the quality of its Governors. Sir John Franklin, the explorer, who became Governor in 1837, was dismissed by Stanley in 1843. Sir Eardley Wilmot was then appointed. Tasmania was not a bed of roses for even a competent administrator. The free settlers were agitating and protesting against the introduction of convicts who developed into bushrangers after, and often before, the completion of their sentence. Stanley refused to take any notice; and the "patriotic six" members of the Legislative Council resigned rather than sanction the disbursements necessary for police and gaols. Mr. Gladstone, having succeeded Stanley, found that Wilmot was neglecting his duties as Governor, and that there were persistent rumours against his private character. Accordingly, shortly before leaving office, he recalled the Governor, and also sent a private despatch marked "secret," informing Wilmot that his re-appointment to another post could not be considered unless and until these charges affecting his character were disposed of.

Recalling a Governor.

* Speech at the National Liberal Club, March 24th, 1890.

The attacks upon Wilmot's private character were not publicly substantiated; indeed, he was acquitted by some of his leading political opponents in Tasmania; and much of the public sympathy enlisted by his recall, and enlarged by his death, was converted into antipathy to Mr. Gladstone. The discussion was not ended until on March 25th, 1847, the House of Lords assented to Lord Stanley's motion for the publication of the correspondence relating to the Governor's recall.

There were a variety of charges and insinuations made against Mr. Gladstone, as that he had recalled Sir Eardley Wilmot on account of rumours about his private character; that though the recall indeed was based on other grounds, yet Mr. Gladstone's despatch—a despatch, they said, calculated to blast the man's reputation—was inspired by these anonymous and untrustworthy rumours; and so forth.

These base and scandalous reports were so prevalent and so damaging to Mr. Gladstone's reputation that Stafford Northcote, who was still acting as his secretary, was deputed to reply. "Mr. Gladstone," said Northcote, in the course of an explanation which may be regarded as at once authoritative and decisive, "did not recall Sir Eardley Wilmot on account of the rumours affecting his private character, but on account of his having given general dissatisfaction, both to Mr. Gladstone and Lord Stanley, by his mode of transacting public business, and more particularly on account of his having shown himself utterly incompetent to administer a very important and very difficult system of convict discipline, and having permitted the most horrible and unheard-of wickedness to become general among the convicts placed under his superintendence, not only without resisting, but, almost without exception, apparently without noticing it. Having so recalled him, Mr. Gladstone would have considered him a candidate for employment in a place for which he would have been less unfit, had it not been for the rumours in question; but the rumours had absolutely nothing whatever to do with the recall itself."

Unfortunately, there were a great many people who, with no desire to clear the reputation of Sir Eardley Wilmot, had a great wish to injure that of Mr. Gladstone. They began to talk about "the peculiar constitution of Mr. Gladstone's mind," his talent for mystification, his love of hair-splitting, his circumlocutions and circumvolutions, the overprudishness of his moral sense, and so on. Now all that Mr. Gladstone knew of Wilmot was that he was a bad Governor and was reputed to be a bad man. Under these circumstances most Ministers "would have dismissed him without scruple and never troubled their heads about reappointing him. Mr. Gladstone felt differently. He knew that if Sir Eardley had failed as a Governor, it was under circumstances of great difficulty. He knew what an acute mortification he was inflicting by the painful but necessary step of recalling him, and he desired to soften the blow by accompanying it with a notice that he would consider him as a candidate for employment elsewhere. Lastly, he knew that if the rumours against him were to be believed, re-employment was out of question; but he felt that it was possible that they admitted of refutation. It is because he so felt, and because so feeling he refused to condemn unheard or to strike in the dark, that he has now been exposed to the misrepresentation and abuse which he might so easily have avoided by

acting like a coward, that is to say, by not acting at all." * It need only be added that Northcote's warm defence is fully borne out by the words of Mr. Gladstone's despatches and Wilmot's letter in reply.

In the spring of 1847 the approaching dissolution of Parliament brought together memberless constituencies and seatless politicians. Mr. Gladstone was still looking for a seat when, at the beginning of the year 1847, a vacancy occurred in the representation of Oxford University. But before deciding to offer himself as a candidate, he indulged in a mild flirtation with Scarborough. A portion of his correspondence with Sir F. W. Trench, M.P. for that borough, has fortunately been preserved. At the end of April he writes an interesting letter in a serious vein, as if he really contemplated accepting the invitation of the Scarborough Conservatives. At any rate, he mentions one or two points to which it would be better to advert at the outset rather than to run the risk of subsequent disagreement:—

A Flirtation with Scarborough, 1847.

"In the first place, I am determined either not to re-enter Parliament, or to re-enter it in a condition to exercise my judgment freely, and without pledges given beforehand, upon all matters of public concern. In the second place, I have always entertained an insuperable objection to what is called treating at elections, as well as to whatever resembles political corruption. I am aware, indeed, that the services of many persons may be required in a contested election, as well as the use of many articles; and the expenses connected with them cannot well be conducted with the same care as that of a domestic establishment. I do not now refer to laxity of this kind within any moderate bounds, but under the name of treating I mean to include all those methods of entertainment which lead to drunkenness and debauchery, and under that of political corruption I could not refuse to class all payments for nominal and unsubstantial services, or payments so arranged as in fact, though not in form, to give the voter a price for his vote."

He added that he could not consent to give subscriptions for religious purposes outside his own communion.

But a month later he had decided to stand for Oxford University; and at the beginning of June he accordingly broke off the negotiations with his friends at Scarborough.

The attractions of a University seat were at that time great. Canning had longed for Oxford, Peel had won and lost it. The expenses of a member were very trifling, and the constituency was still regarded as an intellectual one; for so great was the political acumen and collective wisdom of the electorate of Oxford University that even a statesman might derive fresh dignity and authority from its choice. Mr. Gladstone little knew with what a burden he was encumbering himself. Oxford stunted his political growth and for a time seemed likely to retain or regain him for the Conservative party.

Standing for Oxford University, 1847.

It soon became evident that Mr. Gladstone would get the better of his opponent Round, a Balliol man, who was suspected of unorthodoxy and accused of Nonconformity. At the end of the third day of the

* See "The Case of Sir Eardley Wilmot considered in a Letter to a Friend, by Stafford H. Northcote, Esq.," 2nd edition, London, 1847.

poll, Saturday, July 31st, 2,000 members of Convocation had either voted or paired, and the poll stood:—

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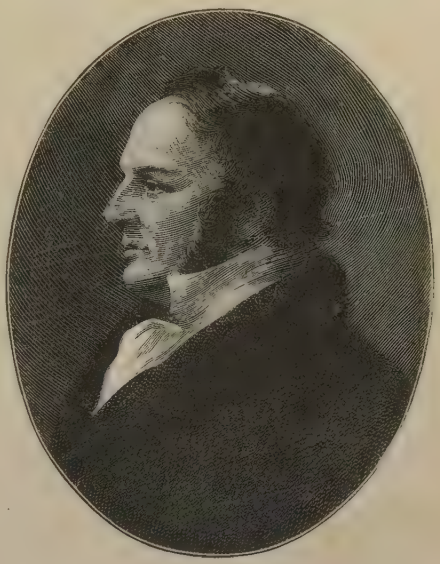
|---|---|
| Inglis ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1,600 |
| Gladstone ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 950 |
| Round ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 757 |

**The Result.**

Round's supporters refused to abandon hope, and insisted on keeping the poll open for the Monday and Tuesday following; but they could not alter the previous result, and the final figures were: Inglis, 1,700; Gladstone, 997; Round, 824. Mr. Gladstone's voting strength was naturally greatest in his own college and in Oriel, the home of the Tractarian movement. Thus at Christ Church he polled 180 against Inglis's 240 and Round's 68, and at Oriel 74 against Inglis's 92 and Round's 25. Round was beaten even in Balliol, his own college, where the figures were: Inglis 98, Gladstone 58, Round 46.



SIR ROBERT INGLIS.
(*From a Painting by Sir G. Hayter.*)

One of the ablest pieces of election literature belonged to the earliest stage of the contest. It was written (anonymously) by the Rev. C. P. Chretien, a Fellow of Oriel. He praises Cardwell, who had been pressed to stand; but asks, "Is the soundness of his own principles as certain as his skill in carrying out those of others?" Chretien recommends Mr. Gladstone in these beautiful words:—

"None can dispute his talents; none can deny his integrity; none can help perceiving that he is a man of strong and powerful individuality. Something more than a mere member of an Administration, he will give a character to his colleagues and their measures perhaps more readily than take one from them. The history of the few last years has shown his well-nigh chivalrous attachment to principle. Almost pertinacious in his honesty, he resolved not to change his opinions without a sacrifice. He is a man who will appreciate the full value of a trust. He will either fulfil it or resign it. In these times of difficulty, when no one sees his way quite clearly, and stern facts wage war with the fairest ideal, a theory which he had formed failed him. He relinquished it, but not the feelings which had led him to frame it—a strong and earnest attachment [to] and reverence for our institutions in Church and State."

The Bishop of Bath and Wells (Dr. Bagot), in a letter dated July, 1847, spoke of Mr. Gladstone's "soundness and deep love for our Church," and quoted two extracts from notes of Mr. Gladstone which he had by him. Both are somewhat remarkable. The first runs: "My convictions" (as to the position of the Church of Rome among ourselves), "which

have never varied, are so strong that, with reference to our spheres of private duty, I would invert the sentiment recently uttered by Lord Arundel in Parliament, and say the Church of England will not fully have done her work until the Church of Rome has ceased to exist and to operate within these realms."

The second tempers the first: "I will never do anything having in my judgment a tendency, directly or ever so indirectly, to advance the cause of Popery in these realms. Nevertheless, if good faith and justice shall seem to raise a claim which I cannot reject, in such a case I must act justly by Jew or Turk, leaving the issue to God."

**Stafford Northcote's Championship.**

Although Mr. Gladstone, except that he wrote a letter in reply to a circular issued by Round's committee, complied with the unwritten rule that a candidate should take no part in the election, his secretary had thrown himself into the contest with zeal and animation. Mr. Gladstone expressed his gratitude to Northcote in various ways, one of which was by asking him to cease signing himself "Your obliged." Mr. Gladstone explained to him privately that the question for the electors was "whether political Oxford shall get shifted out of her palæozoic position into one more suited to her position and work as they now stand." * Northcote had hardly yet begun to feel the influences which were soon to draw him away from his first chief. Mr. Gladstone's friend Hope also took an interest in this election, and described Mrs. Gladstone as "a skilful canvasser, hard to resist."

**In Parliament again, 1847.**

Mr. Gladstone had scarcely settled down again to Parliament after his exile when he found himself at variance with his constituents. On December 8th, 1847, he voted with the majority in favour of a measure extending further relief to Roman Catholics. Sir Robert Inglis had opposed the Bill in a long speech. Mr. Gladstone, out of respect for him and "the distinguished constituency which he had the honour to represent," explained the grounds upon which he gave his vote. With some reservations as regards the Jesuits, "who appear to lay down principles which clash with civil and religious duties," he could find no cause for allowing the existing exclusions of Roman Catholics to continue on the statute-book. "If you tell me," he said, "that by their religious activity they are more dangerous than the secular clergy, my reply is, that they may possibly be so; but whether truly or not, we have no right, on the ground of their superior religious activity, to exclude them from her Majesty's dominions."

**Relief to Roman Catholics.**

**Admission of Jews to Parliament.**

On December 10th Lord John Russell moved that the House should resolve itself into committee to consider the propriety of admitting Jews to Parliament. On this occasion Mr. Gladstone was in a still more difficult position; for his colleague not only opposed the Prime Minister, but had just presented a petition from the University of Oxford against the proposed measure. Mr. Gladstone began by speaking in what seems an exaggerated strain of humility of the relation in which he stood to his constituents: "I think hon. members will concur with me," he said, "that there is something peculiar in that relation;

* Life of Stafford Northcote, by Mr. Andrew Lang, vol. i., pp. 71, 72.

that in ordinary cases of representation there is a palpable difference between the person who sits here and those who send him here; that he ought to be, and commonly is, their superior in mental cultivation and in opportunities of knowledge; and that it is an easy thing comparatively, under these circumstances, for him to act upon that which is undoubtedly the true principle of representation, namely, to follow the conscientious dictates of his own judgment, whether they happen to coincide in the particular case with the judgment of his constituency or not. But for me, Sir, the circumstances are very different. I have received the honour of being chosen to represent in this House a body, of which I gladly acknowledge that I must look upon the members of whom it is composed as being in ability, in knowledge, in all means of judgment which depend upon individual character, either superior, or, on the least favourable showing, equal to myself." But this did not absolve him as a member of Parliament from following the dictates of his own judgment, though "it greatly increased the responsibility attaching to error." Mr. Gladstone, in a long and interesting argument, pointed out that this was the third phase the question had assumed. Conservatives had contended first for an Anglican Parliament, then for a Protestant Parliament, now for a Christian Parliament. In the first two cases "you were defeated. You were not defeated unawares; you were not defeated owing to accident. You were defeated owing to profound and powerful and uniform tendencies, associated with the movement of the human mind, with the general course of events, perhaps I ought to say with the Providential government of the world." Even the third contest had logically been decided: "In the year 1841, opposing the Bill then introduced by the noble lord (Lord John Russell) for the admission of Jews to municipal offices, I argued, and I founded my opposition on the principle, that no broad or clear line could be drawn between their eligibility for what was then in question and their eligibility for Parliament." Mr. Gladstone's attempt to re-define his position in the House of Commons throws considerable light upon the mental process by which he was slowly and almost reluctantly liberalising himself. "The right hon. gentleman," said Disraeli, keen and ungenerously appreciative as ever, when he intervened later in the debate, "gave us a philosophical description of the consecutive development of circumstances in this country, which rendered it, in his opinion, politic and even necessary to support the proposition of the noble lord, though at the same time he seemed to conceive that a state of affairs might exist which would be more agreeable to his feelings, and more consentaneous to his wishes."

The year 1847, which had now come to a close, had brought with it financial troubles in connection with the Hawarden estate. A more convenient opportunity for dealing with the subject will be found in a later chapter.

The General Election of 1847, though it strengthened the Whigs, did not enable them to dispense with Peelite support; but in spite of much dissatisfaction and some revolts on the part of Mr. Gladstone and the more Conservative of the Peelites, their tenure of office was secure so long as Sir Robert Peel lived. The Protectionist party was still strong, and Peel thought that Free Trade could only be maintained by keeping

Lord John Russell and the Whigs in office. Peel was no doubt right, and he deserves the utmost credit for refusing, at the risk of still further reducing his diminished party, to compromise what he now regarded as the prime object of statesmanship. In later times Mr. Gladstone used to maintain that Peel's fears were groundless; and this no doubt would have been his defence for the faltering course and wavering opinions which are exhibited by his votes and speeches at this period of his life. Moreover, religious and ecclesiastical controversies contributed to his anxiety to see the Whigs driven out of office. He knew that it was a personal and not a national interest that had attracted Disraeli and Stanley to the beauties of a Protectionist landscape. Might not Peel have offered them a still more desirable outlook from a Free-trade window?

**Peel Keeps the Whigs in Office.**

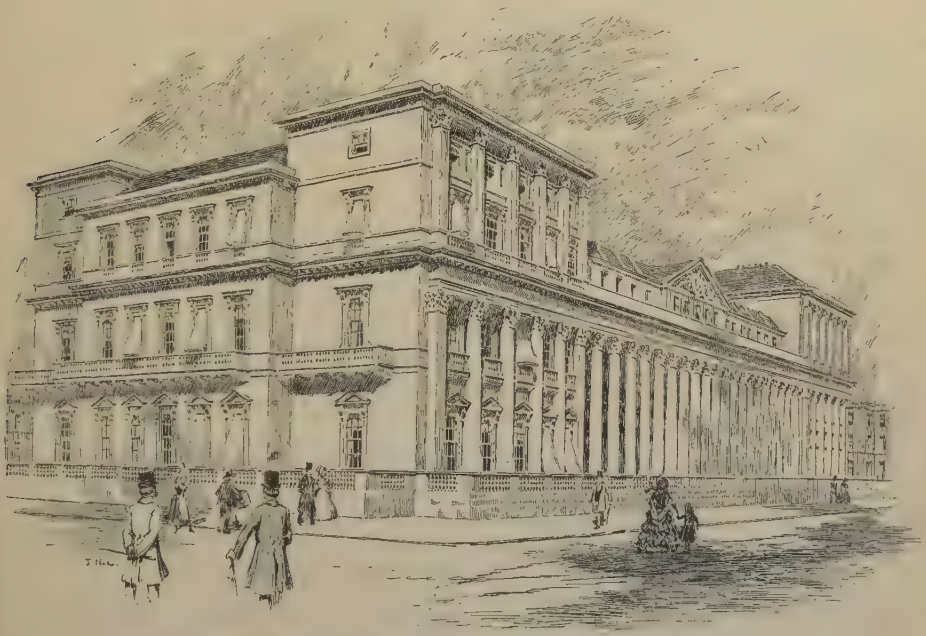
Another antipathy suggested a similar policy. Mrs. Simpson, in her "Many"—but not too many—"Memories of Many People," tells how in the late 'Forties she was travelling with her father, Nassau Senior, the economist, in South Germany and Austria: "At one place a crowd collected round us, and when we asked the reason, we were told that they had seen Lord Palmerston's name on our passport, and wished to see that *berühmter Mann*, as they supposed my father was he." The meddlesome swagger and dictatorial diplomacy of the Foreign Secretary, which had impressed the poor Teutons with awe and admiration, only disgusted Mr. Gladstone. He was not yet sufficiently acquainted with the petty despotisms of Germany and Italy to feel with those who tried to assert the principles of liberty in the revolutionary year of 1848. The cup had to be filled many times before he could condone the peremptory warning or contemptuous kick which Palmerston loved to administer to foreign rulers who cared as little as Lord Palmerston himself for domestic liberty. Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that Mr. Gladstone showed no immediate signs of sympathy with the Continental revolutionaries. It was only by slow degrees that he learned fully to appreciate the earlier, as he already appreciated the later, Burke. Not that he could encourage Continental tyranny; but Lord Palmerston's foreign policy was so dangerous and indiscriminating that both Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Gladstone were perhaps driven somewhat too far in the opposite direction. So in a letter to Monckton Milnes, in February, 1849, Mr. Gladstone criticises the optimistic view of the results of the year of revolution which the former had taken in a pamphlet, and protests against the doctrine that Great Britain ought "to undertake the function of setting all countries right whenever we think they go wrong;" though he charitably refers Milnes' bias not to "original error" but to admiration of Lord Palmerston.

**Palmerston and Gladstone.**

In England the revolutionary explosives had fizzled out in "the monster petition" of the Chartists. Feargus O'Connor, the leading spirit, was an Irish politician of the type then most acceptable to his own countrymen, and most obnoxious to those who were concerned in the maintenance of law and order. In the House of Commons he was responsible for the famous remark that he did not care whether the country was governed by the

**Chartism, 1848.**

Queen, the Pope, or the Devil:* and it was thought that a monster petition (it turned out only afterwards that most of the signatures were forged) manipulated by such a desperado might bring about the most horrible calamities. The Government offices were hastily fortified; the clerks armed themselves with antique and formidable weapons; and vast numbers of special policemen, among them Mr. Gladstone, were enrolled to protect London against the wave of Chartism. These precautions were either effective or superfluous.



CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, WHERE MR. GLADSTONE LIVED IN THE 'FORTIES.
*(From a Drawing by T. H. Shepherd.)*

On February 19th, 1849, Mr. Gladstone spoke in support of Lord John Russell's proposal for abbreviating and rationalising Parliamentary oaths, and in the following month, though he voted against an abstract resolution for the abolition of Church rates, he admitted that the law was in a most unsatisfactory state, and that "the evils attending the present system were enormous." **Church Rates, 1849.**

In the one month of March, 1849, Mr. Gladstone spoke more than a score of times on the Navigation Laws, in favour of what he called "conditional relaxation." "Absolute relaxation," a euphemistic circumlocution for repeal, he would not recommend (though he only opposed it in Committee) until the timber duties had been entirely swept away, holding that "if you **The Navigation Laws, 1849.**

* To which Sir R. Peel retorted that, if the last named ever became supreme in England, "no doubt the hon. member would enjoy the confidence of the Crown."

expose him [the shipbuilder] to unrestricted competition with foreign shipping, there ought to be a drawback, or the remission of the duty upon the wood that is necessary for his use." The Navigation Bill, which implied a virtual abandonment of the restrictions on shipping, was read a second time, after a long and adjourned debate, by a majority of 56. Mr. Gladstone spoke strongly in favour of the second reading on the 12th of March, the last day of the debate. He quoted evidence given before a committee of the House of Lords in 1847 by a leading representative of the shipping interest, who said "in so many words, that for many years past—some twenty or thirty years, I think—fully one-half of the capital embarked in the shipping trade of this country had been lost, and that of the other part a very large portion has yielded no remuneration, and but a very few individuals, *rari nantes*, had here and there been fortunate enough to save themselves from the universal ruin."

At that time the Shipowners' Society thought Protection a national principle which should never be departed from under any circumstances. "They think that in that principle there is something in the nature of a talisman, or a charm, or a mine of national wealth, which they would tenaciously cling to and cherish as their very life's blood." But the day of Protection was now past. "As long as there were various other cases of Protection in existence, the shipowner might rest listlessly under the shadow of that widespreading tree; but now that every branch has been lopped off, he must stand up and show what the special grounds are that entitle him exclusively to the continuance of Protection."

The whole speech is a brilliant exposition of Free-trade theory and of "the self-regulating principle" by which populations and classes monopolise under Free Trade those pursuits for which they are best adapted, a principle to which Mr. Gladstone appeals by way of discrediting the vain vaticinations of Protectionists, who thought repeal would spell ruin, and bring about the displacement of the British by the Norwegian shipbuilders. The Bill was finally passed into law after some modifications which, in deference to Mr. Gladstone's suggestions, had been inserted in its later stages. The mutual concessions of Mr. Gladstone and of Labouchere, who, as President of the Board of Trade, was then conducting the measure, reminded Disraeli of the celebrated "day of dupes" in the French Revolution, when nobles and prelates flung their useless coronets and riches to the dust. Mr. Gladstone bore the sarcasm with good humour as one who "conscientiously differed" from its author on the question of the freedom of trade.

In the remainder of the session of 1849 Mr. Gladstone turned his attention to Colonial questions, and especially to Canada, which was just emerging from a condition of metropolitan misgovernment, "Imperial interference," and domestic disaffection into one of Home Rule, contentment, and loyalty. "What was the Canadian controversy?" asked Mr. Gladstone in 1886, when he had begun his last great political battle; "what was the issue in the case of Canada? Government from Downing Street. These few words embrace the whole controversy. . . . What was the cry of those who resisted the concession of autonomy to Canada? It was

**Canada and Home Rule, 1849.**

the cry which has slept for a long time, and which has acquired vigour from sleeping; it was the cry with which we are now familiar, the cry of the unity of the Empire. In my opinion the relation with Canada was one of very great danger to the unity of the Empire at that time; but it was the remedy for the mischief, and not the mischief itself, which was regarded as dangerous to the unity of the Empire. In those days, habitually in the House of Commons, the mass of the people of Canada were denounced as rebels. Some of them were Protestants, and of English and Scotch birth. The majority of them were Roman Catholic, and of French extraction. The French rebelled. Was that because they were of French extraction and because they were Roman Catholics? No; for the English of Upper Canada did exactly the same thing."*

On the 18th January, 1849, La Fontaine had brought forward in the Canadian Parliament the famous Rebellion Losses Bill (12 Vict. c. 58), a measure which provided for the indemnification of persons in Lower Canada whose property had been destroyed in the rebellion of 1836–7. A provision was inserted into the Bill excluding from compensation those who had been convicted of treason. But no further distinction was made, and the Canadian Tories were furious with the Liberal Government and its French supporters for "putting a premium on treason." The Bill, however, was passed in March and approved by the Governor-General, Lord Elgin, in the following month, an act for which the Montreal mob wreaked its stupid fury on Lord Elgin and on Montreal.†

Mr. Gladstone made several severe criticisms upon the policy of the Bill in Supply during the month of June, asking whether—if the question raised by the purposes contemplated in the Act were an Imperial question —"the course proposed, namely, the indemnification of those who bore arms against her Majesty during these rebellions, is consistent; or is it vitally at variance with the honour and dignity of the Crown?" However, the Government secured their vote by a majority of 141, which included Peel, Cardwell, and Graham.

As it turned out, the Commission which was appointed under the Act discharged its duties in a way that conciliated the opposition, refusing compensation to many who were notorious rebels but had not been convicted.

In the August of 1848 a calamity had occurred which brought out the heroic qualities, the spirit of active self-sacrifice, which distinguished Mr. Gladstone in his personal relations, as well as in his public duties. His long friendship with Lord Lincoln, begun at Christ Church, had been strengthened by the connection with Newark and by their co-operation with Peel. Moreover, Mrs. Gladstone, through her brother's friendship with Lord Douglas, was also intimate with Douglas's sister; so that when the sister married Lord Lincoln another tie existed between the two families. How in the

**The Lincoln Divorce.**

* Speech in the House of Commons, May 10th, 1886.

† On April 25th Lord Elgin's carriage was "almost shattered by stones," and in the evening the Parliament buildings were burnt, with the precious library, containing unique records of the Colony. This led to the removal of the seat of Government from Montreal. *Cf.* "Memoirs of Sir J. A. Macdonald," by Joseph Pope, vol. i., pp. 66—69.

summer of 1848, Lady Lincoln deserted her husband and five children on the pretence of seeking medical advice in Baden, how she made her way almost at once to Ems and joined Lord Walpole, how they travelled about Southern Europe as brother and sister, or as Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence, is a story which cannot be wholly omitted from these pages, since it forms not only a dramatic chapter in Mr. Gladstone's life, but also a most eloquent.

W. E. GLADSTONE.

(*From the Portrait by George Richmond*, 1849.)

because a most practical, testimony to that spirit of loyalty and devotion which was ever ready to answer the call of a distressed friend as well as of a distressed country.

Lady Lincoln left her husband on August 2nd, 1848; Mr. Gladstone followed and found her in the following summer. The Divorce Bill —divorce was then a luxury possible only to the wealthy—was introduced in the House of Lords in the May of 1850.

Rumours of Lady Lincoln's misconduct reached England before she had been a month abroad; "and in consequence of these rumours," said Mr.

Gladstone, in his evidence before the House of Lords at the second reading of the Divorce Bill,* "meetings took place which led to my going abroad. The character of the rumours to which I refer was such as left no doubt that there were unhappy indiscretions which were capable of a worse construction. There was, however, no disposition to put the worst construction upon them, and a strong hope was entertained that nothing but indiscretions had taken place. The matter was one which we viewed in two lights, namely, as a matter involving criminality—in which case a professional person would at once be sent out to investigate; or as a matter involving indiscretion—in which case a friend of Lord Lincoln's should go and induce Lady Lincoln, if he could obtain access to her, to place herself in a position of security. The latter was the view adopted, and in the capacity just mentioned I went abroad."

Mr. Gladstone then described his mission: "I went in quest of her to Naples, going to Rome first in order to avoid quarantine. She had left Naples, however, some time before my arrival, for Genoa, and had desired letters to be addressed to her at Milan, as she was going to try some baths in that neighbourhood. At Milan I found a trace of Lady Lincoln by her own name, and in consequence of something I learnt there I was induced to go to Como, where I was led to believe that she was residing in the Villa Mancini under the feigned name of Mrs. Lawrence. I got to Como on the morning of Tuesday, the 31st of July last, and on my arrival I went at once to the villa and endeavoured to obtain an interview." She refused to see him and drove away in a carriage the next day. Mr. Gladstone at first followed, "but weighing the whole matter in my own mind, and considering the undesirableness of presenting myself before her, I turned back, while she took the way to Verona." Mr. Gladstone then returned to England, and it was decided to take proceedings to obtain a divorce.

Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone continued to show the greatest kindness to Lord Lincoln's children; and so it fell out naturally that Mr. Gladstone was appointed guardian and trustee. Some scattered references to the Continental journey which was involved in this long and unavailing search may be found in Mr. Gladstone's writings.

The year 1850 was, wrote Mr. Gladstone himself, "one of sorrow and anxiety for my wife and me." Suffering began in the spring with the fatal illness of their little daughter Catherine Jessy, who died on the 9th of April, at the age of not quite five years. The father suffered an agony of anxiety, "taking his share in the nursing and watching"; and then at last wrote the little record of her life and death. In the winter, as we shall see later, anxiety for the health of another daughter took them to Naples on a visit which, undertaken on purely medical advice, was destined to lead to important results for Italy and for Mr. Gladstone.

A Year of Sorrow and Anxiety, 1850.

* It was on this occasion that, to Lord Brougham's question, "You and Mrs. Gladstone have been on friendly terms with Lady Lincoln, have you not?" Mr. Gladstone gave the much-criticised reply, "Yes, allowing for the difference of station, we were well acquainted with her ladyship." Humility perilously near servility would be the natural comment. But Lord Brougham seems to have displayed a certain brusqueness of manner, and the expression is susceptible of an ironical interpretation.

Another calamity was impending which would draw deeply on Mr. Gladstone's vast fund of courage and endurance. Northcote writes from the Board of Trade on April 25th, 1850, about a talk he has just had with Mr. Gladstone, whom he consulted as to the desirability of entering the House of Commons:—

"He was out of spirits himself about public matters, and did not paint Parliamentary life in rose colour, but thought my position would perhaps be less embarrassing than his own in the sort of times he expects.

*Photo: Watmough Webster, Chester.*

CATHERINE JESSY GLADSTONE.

(*From a Painting at Hawarden Castle.*)

"He is distressed at the position Peel has taken up, and at the want of sympathy between those who for so many years acted cordially together; and he looks forward to serious Church troubles, which, he thinks, might possibly drive him out of Parliament."

These troubles did not drive Mr. Gladstone from Parliament, but they separated him from his two closest friends.

The Gorham judgment, which inspired both Manning and Hope Scott with the resolution to leave the Church, impelled Mr. Gladstone to write a strong letter to Bishop Blomfield on the Royal supremacy—perhaps the most eloquent of his religious writings—in which he urged that the powers in ecclesiastical matters recently conferred on the Privy Council formed a "grave and dangerous departure from the Reformation settlement," and a wrongful encroachment upon episcopal authority:—

**The Gorham Judgment.**

"I find it no part of my duty, my Lord, to idolise the Bishops of England and Wales, or to place my conscience in their keeping. I do not presume or dare to speculate upon their particular decisions; but I say that, acting jointly, publicly, solemnly, responsibly, they are the best and most natural organs of the judicial office of the Church in matters of heresy, and, according to reason, history, and the Constitution, in that subject-matter the fittest and safest counsellors of the Crown."

But his loyalty to the Church into which he was born never seems to have been seriously shaken by the melancholy failure of his attempts to improve her constitution. Even in the bitterness of the Gorham judgment he could recall De Maistre's eulogy and make it the text of his own profound and fervent emotion:—

**Unshaken Loyalty to the Church.**

"It is nearly sixty years since thus a pilgrim and an alien, a stickler to the extremest point for the prerogatives of his Church, and nursed in every prepossession against ours, nevertheless, turning his eye across the Channel, though he could then only see her in the lethargy of her organisation, and the dull twilight of her learning, could nevertheless discern that there was a special work written of God for her in heaven, and that she was VERY PRECIOUS to the Christian world. Oh! how serious a rebuke to those who, not strangers but suckled at her breast, not two generations back, but the witnesses now of her true and deep repentance, and of her reviving zeal and love, yet (under whatever provocation) have written concerning her even as men might write that were hired to make a case against her, and by an adverse instinct in the selection of evidence, and a severity of construction such as no history of the deeds of man can bear, have often, too often in these last years, put her to open shame! But what a word of hope and encouragement to everyone who, as convinced in his heart of the glory of her providential mission, shall unshrinkingly devote himself to defending within her borders the full and whole doctrine of the Cross, with that mystic symbol now as ever gleaming down on him from Heaven, now as ever showing forth its inscription: *in hoc signo vinces.*"

The important secessions noted above, with which the anti-Popery agitation—"a strong political excitement"—was closely connected, demand the special attention of the biographer, on account of the great influence they exerted upon Mr. Gladstone's future growth.

Rationalistic development at Oxford had set in about 1849. Puseyism was nearly dead there when the Gorham judgment created renewed ferment early in 1850. The Court of Arches had decided (August 3rd, 1849) that Dr. Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, was justified in refusing to institute Mr. Gorham to a living in his diocese. The Bishop had held that Mr. Gorham's view of baptism was unorthodox. But the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which consisted of bishops and laymen, reversed the judgment on grounds which irritated Roundell Palmer into an epigram: "The judges took their law from the bishops, and the bishops their divinity from the judges."

The Evangelical party generally welcomed the judgment "as establishing in their favour a liberty of opinion which few but the most extreme Calvinists among them had until then assumed."* But the High Churchmen were severely tried. Some protested, others—and among them Manning, Robert and Henry Wilberforce, and James Hope—found in this judgment one more decisive reason for joining the Church of Rome.

The defection of the first named and the last of these men, which was

* Roundell Palmer's Memorials, vol. ii., p. 68.

announced in the autumn of 1851, cut Mr. Gladstone to the quick. The two friends with whom he had been accustomed to take constant counsel in all that touched him most deeply as regarded personal religion and ecclesiastical policy were irrevocably lost. "I felt," he said, "as if I had lost my two eyes." To a modern this change of Church might seem an insufficient reason for breaking off the intimacy of years. Our notion of friendship is more cultivated perhaps, certainly more watery, than that which used to prevail. Now the most fashionable intimacies are based upon political antagonism. The drawing-room recognises that politics is a mimetic art, that the thunders of the House must not reverberate elsewhere. House-land is stage-land more than ever before.

**The Secession of Manning and James Hope.**

To transfer our own conceptions to a criticism of Mr. Gladstone's earliest and closest friendships would lead to an utter misapprehension of his character, of his intense earnestness, his strong conviction that he was in the right. It followed that those who were nearest and dearest to him were those who agreed with him upon fundamentals, theological or political, and were ready to work, as he himself was always ready, to carry a common principle into practice.

In the case of Manning there was probably no ardent personal affection. They had worked together in ecclesiastical policy: and when they became ecclesiastical antagonists close intercourse became undesirable as well as impossible. But the friendship with Hope—who afterwards on inheriting Abbotsford became Hope-Scott—belongs to a different category; it dated from the year 1836. At Eton and Oxford they had been acquaintances only. In a beautiful letter written in 1873 to Mrs. Maxwell-Scott, the daughter of his friend, Mr. Gladstone spoke in terms of extraordinary praise:—

**A Eulogy of James Hope.**

"Among the large number of estimable and remarkable people whom I have known, and who have now passed away, there is in my memory an inner circle, and within it are the forms of those who were marked off from the comparative crowd even of the estimable and remarkable by the peculiarity and privilege of their type. Of these very few—some four or five, I think, only—your father was one: and with regard to them it always seemed to me as if the type in each case was that of the individual exclusively, and as if there could be but one such person in our world at a time. After the early death of Arthur Hallam, I used to regard your father distinctly as at the head of all his contemporaries in the brightness and beauty of his gifts."

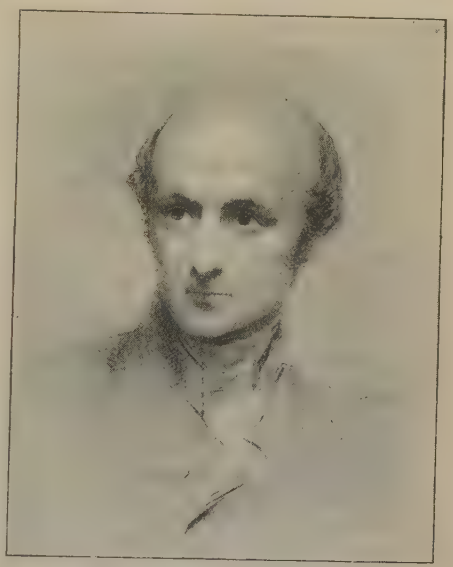
Mr. Gladstone traced a parallel between Hope's development and that of Newman, the great luminary who "drew after him the third part of the stars of heaven," and added his "opinion (I put it no higher) that the Jerusalem bishopric snapped the link which bound Dr. Newman to the English Church. I have a conviction that it cut away the ground on which your father had hitherto most firmly and undoubtedly stood. Assuredly, from 1841 or 1842 onwards, his most fond, most faithful, most ideal love progressively decayed, and doubt nestled and gnawed in his soul. He was, however, of a nature in which levity could find no place."

Characteristically enough Mr. Gladstone did not draw attention to what might well seem an essential condition of Hope's religious transition, the lawyer's mind. Indeed, Hope's legal arguments were largely responsible

for Manning's almost contemporary decision. At any rate, the impression left by this successful barrister upon Mr. Gladstone can only be compared to that which was left by Arthur Hallam, the idol of his boyhood:—

"I always felt and knew my own position beside him to be one of mental as well as moral inferiority. I cannot remember any occasion on which I exercised an influence over him. I remember many on which I tried; and especially when I saw his mind shaken, and, so to speak, on the slide. But these attempts (of which you may possibly have some written record) completely failed, and drove him into reserve. Never, on any one occasion, would he enter freely into the question with me. I think the fault lay much on my side. My touch was not fine enough for his delicate spirit."

One more passage from this remarkable piece of autobiography may be added; for it explains better than anything else could explain how intense, if that epithet may be applied, was the interpretation which Mr. Gladstone could set upon a friendship of the first order. It was well for Mr. Gladstone's happiness that the process of uprooting was a gradual one:—



HENRY EDWARD MANNING.

(*From the Drawing by Geo. Richmond*, 1851).

"Whatever may have been the precise causes of the reticence to which I have referred (and it is possible that physical weakness was among them), the character of our friendship had during these later years completely changed. It was originally formed in common and very absorbing interests. He was not one of those shallow souls which think, or persuade themselves they think, that such a relation can continue in vigour and in fruitfulness when its daily bread has been taken away. The feeling of it indeed remained on both sides, as you will see. On my side, I may say that it became more intense; but only according to that perversity, or infirmity, of human nature, according to which we seem to love truly only when we lose. My affection for him, during those later years before his change, was, I may almost say, intense; and there was hardly anything, I think, which he could have asked me to do and which I would not have done. But as I saw more and more through the dim light what was to happen, it became more and more like the affection which is felt for one departed."

Hope wrote to the effect that it would hardly be possible "for either of us to attempt (except under one condition, for which I daily pray) the restoration of entire intimacy at present." Mr. Gladstone thus replied:—

"6, Carlton Gardens. June 22nd, 1851.

"MY DEAR HOPE,—Upon the point most prominently put in your welcome letter I will only say that you have not misconstrued me. Affection which is fed by intercourse, and above all by co-operation for sacred ends, has little need of verbal expression, but such expression is deeply ennobling when active relations have changed. It

is no matter of merit to me to feel strongly on the subject of that change. It may be little better than pure selfishness. I have too good reason to know what this year has cost me; and so little hope have I that the places now vacant can be filled up for me, that the marked character of these events in reference to myself rather teaches me this lesson—the work to which I had aspired is reserved for other and better men. And if that be the Divine will, I so entirely recognise its fitness that the grief would so far be small to me were I alone concerned. The pain, the wonder, and the mystery is this —that you should have refused the higher vocation you had before you. The same words, and all the same words, I should use of Manning too. Forgive me for giving utterance to what I believe myself to see and know; I will not proceed a step further in that direction.

**A Letter to James Hope.**

"There is one word, and one only, in your letter that I do not interpret closely. Separated we are, but I hope and think not yet estranged. Were I more estranged I should bear the separation better. If estrangement is to come I know not, but it will only be, I think, from causes the operation of which is still in its infancy—causes not affecting me. Why should I be estranged from you? I honour you even in what I think your error; why, then, should my feelings to you alter in anything else? It seems to me as though, in these fearful times, events were more and more growing too large for our puny grasp, and that we should the more look for and trust the Divine purpose in them, when we find they have wholly passed beyond the reach and measure of our own. 'The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.' The very afflictions of the present time are a sign of joy to follow. *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,* is still our prayer in common: the same prayer, in the same sense; and a prayer which absorbs every other. That is for the future: for the present we have to endure, to trust, and to pray that each day may bring its strength with its burden, and its lamp for its gloom.

Ever yours with unaltered affection,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."*

Writing twenty-two years afterwards to Mrs. Maxwell-Scott, Mr. Gladstone says of the beautiful letter to which the above was the reply:—

"It was the epitaph of our friendship, which continued to live, but only, or almost only, as it lives between those who inhabit separate worlds. On no day since that date, I think, was he absent from my thoughts; and now I can scarcely tear myself from the fascination of writing about him. . . . If anything which it contains has hurt you, recollect the chasm which separates our points of view; recollect that what came to him as light and blessing and emancipation, had never offered itself to me otherwise than as a temptation and a sin; recollect that when he found what he held his 'pearl of great price,' his discovery was to me beyond what I could describe, not only a shock and a grief, but a danger too. I having given you my engagement, you having accepted it, I have felt that I must above all things be true, and that I could only be true by telling you everything. If I have traversed some of the ground in sadness, I now turn to the brighter thought of his present light and peace and progress; may they be his more and more abundantly, in that world where the shadows that our sins and follies cast no longer darken the aspect and glory of the truth; and may God ever bless you, the daughter of my friend!" †

**Afterthoughts.**

Two such losses might well set Mr. Gladstone thinking how he could reconstruct his purposes in questions ecclesiastical. Even in the domain of Church policy he was far too good a politician to disregard changing circumstances; and the changes about this time had been sufficiently remarkable. How deeply they impressed Mr. Gladstone may be illustrated from an article on the Evangelical movement published in 1879 in the *British Quarterly Review*:—

**Effect of the Secessions upon Mr. Gladstone.**

* "Memoirs of Hope-Scott," vol. ii., pp. 88, 89. † *Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 286, 287.

"Equally undeniable is it that the Church of England has supplied her Roman relative during our time, and especially between 1840 and 1850, with an unrivalled band of recruits. A pamphlet recently printed, under the title of 'Rome's Recruits,' enumerates about three thousand. Of these several hundreds are clergymen; and persons of title are also numerous. Some of these seceders were persons brought for the first time under strong religious influences. Some cases may have been due to personal idiosyncrasies; some to a strong reaction from pure unbelief; some came from Presbyterianism, the merest handful from Nonconformity, or, on the other side, from the old-fashioned Anglican precinct represented by men like Archbishop Howley, Bishop Blomfield, or Dr. Hook. Very many, and especially among women, made the change through what may be called pious appetite, without extended knowledge or careful inquiry. But there was a large, and, still more, an important class, not included within any of these descriptions; principally clerical, but not without a lay fraction, made up of men competent in every way by talent, attainment, position, character, to exercise a judgment, which judgment they did exercise in general to their own heavy temporal prejudice. The secession of this body of men is a conspicuous event, of the first order in the Anglican religious history of a very remarkable time. It is a matter of importance to inquire, What persons are responsible, and what system is responsible, for this result? From more than one point of view, it can hardly be regarded as other than a serious disaster, inasmuch as it has sharpened the outlines and heightened the pretensions of Romanism not less decidedly than it thinned the regimental forces of the Anglican system, and for a time utterly disparaged, if it did not destroy its credit."

In his "Chapter of Autobiography,"* Mr. Gladstone admits the important effect which the religious movements of these years had upon his views as to ecclesiastical policy. All parties in the State had now abandoned the idea of asserting for the Anglican Church "those exclusive claims" which Mr .Gladstone himself had so earnestly affirmed by speech and writing in the first decade of his political life, but which "become positively unjust in a divided country governed on popular principles." "I for one," he said, speaking of the earlier years of the Oxford movement—

"formed a completely false estimate of what was about to happen; and believed that the Church of England through the medium of a regenerated clergy and an intelligent and attached laity, would not only hold her ground, but would even in great part probably revive the love and the allegiance both of the masses who were wholly falling away from religious observances, and of those large and powerful Nonconforming bodies, the existence of which was supposed to have no other cause than the neglect of its duties by the National Church, which had long left the people as sheep without a shepherd.

"And surely it would have required either a deeply saturnine or a marvellously prophetic mind to foretell that, in ten or twelve more years, that powerful and distinguished generation of clergy would be broken up: that at least a moiety of the most gifted sons, whom Oxford had reared for the service of the Church of England would be hurling at her head the hottest bolts of the Vatican: that, with their deviation on the one side, there would arise a not less convulsive rationalistic movement on the other; and that the natural consequences would be developed in endless contention and estrangement, and in suspicions worse than either, because even less accessible, and even more intractable.

"There was an error not less serious in my estimate of English Nonconformity. I remember the astonishment with which at some period—I think in 1851-2—after ascertaining the vast addition which had been made to the number of churches in the country, I discovered that the multiplication of chapels, among those not belonging to the Church of England, had been more rapid still.

"But besides the immense extension of its material and pastoral organisation, English Nonconformity (in general) appears now to have founded itself on a principle of its own,

* "Gleanings," vol. vii., pp. 143, 144.

which forbids the alliance of the civil power with religion in any particular form or forms. I do not embrace that principle. But I must observe, in passing, that it is not less unjust than it is common, to stigmatise those who hold it as 'political Dissenters'; a phrase implying that they do not dissent on religious grounds. But if they, because they object to the union of Church and State, are political Dissenters, it follows that all who uphold it are political Churchmen."

We now return to the political world, which was to be divided for the next four years between the rival but incompatible attractions of prosperous Budgets and showy diplomacy. The line of cleavage separated Cabinets as well as Parliaments, giving additional complexity to an almost unprecedented confusion of parties. It is the one great interest of the time, this long-sustained but unequal contest, which ended so miserably and disastrously in the Crimean War. In other respects political animosities asserted their traditional predominance over political principles; and a superficial observer might easily have neglected the great principle which underlay the petty intrigues of the leaders and the petty skirmishes of the factions.

**A Confusion of Parties, 1850.**

The old political highways had fallen into disuse, and the more rapid lines of progress had hardly been planned, much less laid down. Under such conditions the strongest and most courageous of politicians could not maintain a rigid and undeviating course. The beginning of the session of 1850 was remarkable for a clever political manœuvre by which Disraeli—who had now succeeded to the leadership of the Protectionist party—contrived to detach Mr. Gladstone from Peel and Graham, and nearly defeated the Whig Government. He moved for a committee to consider a revision of the Poor Law in the interests of the agricultural classes. It was a plan for compensating the country gentlemen for the loss of Protection by relieving them of rates; and Mr. Gladstone persuaded himself to vote for it on the ground that the incidence of the Poor rate was unequal, and that the farmer and the independent yeoman would be the persons to benefit by the change. It is difficult to justify Mr. Gladstone's conduct—still less his theory—on this occasion, the first and the last on which Mr. Disraeli found in that quarter any positive support to the fatal but enticing policy of Imperial doles or grants in aid of local taxation.

On the Australian Colonies Government Bill Mr. Gladstone again tried to beat the Government by supporting an amendment of Spencer Walpole's, which would have strengthened the Crown, and an amendment of Molesworth's, which would have weakened it,* and by himself moving the insertion of a clause which would have given ecclesiastical autonomy to the Colonial dioceses of the Church of England. Indeed, Mr. Gladstone was in a mood of chronic and often reactionary opposition; for he spoke in favour of a motion which would have excepted the West Indian colonists from Free Trade, and opposed the appointment of the Royal Commission to inquire into the state of the English and Irish universities—an inquiry which led to the first great beneficial measure of University Reform. But these delinquencies were amply compensated in June.

* Walpole moved to substitute two Chambers for one—a lower which would be elective, and an upper to be nominated by the Crown. Molesworth moved to omit the clauses which gave the Colonial Office power to disallow Colonial laws.

Lord Palmerston's foreign policy, always offensive in its form, had now become quite intolerable in its substance. In the previous year his interferences had justified Macaulay's admiration. Now, instead of protecting the Sicilians, he was bullying Greece. France, of whose friendship he had boasted in 1849, had withdrawn her ambassador from London. The situation was exceedingly grave, for Russia supported France; but an element of the ridiculous was imparted by the character of one of the *dramatis personæ*, Don Pacifico, a Maltese Jew and an English subject, who gave his name to the piece. Don Pacifico's house had been sacked by an Athenian mob, and the Greek Government was unwilling to compensate him on his own terms. For this and other smaller offences Palmerston presented an ultimatum; and when the Greek Government procrastinated, he despatched a fleet to the Piræus, which seized a number of Greek vessels. For these proceedings Stanley carried a vote of censure on the Government in the House of Lords. Roebuck came to the rescue in the Commons by asking the House to assent to a preposterous resolution that the foreign policy of the Government was "calculated to maintain the honour and dignity of the country, and in times of unexampled difficulty to preserve peace between England and the other nations of the world." A great debate arose on the 24th of June, 1850. When Lord Palmerston began his reply on the second night of the debate it was already late. For five hours he defended himself with almost superhuman energy and skill. Success might have seemed impossible. But Palmerston knew only too well the weaker side of the English character; and he rose to the occasion by descending to the level of his audience. Unfortunately, but, considering the hour, not unnaturally, the report of the speech is anything but satisfactory. But there can be no doubt that it was in its way a masterpiece of oratory. Towards the close of the fifth hour, when he thought that he had made sufficiently manifest, by comparison with Continental Powers, the splendour of the position in which he had placed his country, Palmerston remarked that he was not in the least surprised at the attempt to turn him out:—

**Palmerston's Foreign Policy.**

**The Case of Don Pacifico, 1850.**

**Palmerston's Speech.**

"The Government of a great country like this is undoubtedly an object of fair and legitimate ambition to men of all shades of opinion. It is a noble thing to be allowed to guide the policy and to influence the destinies of such a country; and if ever it was an object of honourable ambition, more than ever must it be so at the moment at which I am speaking."

And so on until he ended triumphantly:—

"I therefore fearlessly challenge the verdict which this House, as representing a political, a commercial, a constitutional country, is to give on the question now before it; whether the principles on which the foreign policy of her Majesty's Government has been conducted, and the sense of duty which has led us to think ourselves bound to afford protection to our fellow subjects abroad, are proper and fitting guides for those who are charged with the government of England; and whether, as the Roman in days of old held himself free from indignity, when he could say *Civis Romanus sum*, so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong."

The debate was continued on the 27th, and Mr. Gladstone delivered his famous reply, which has already been noticed in the Introduction

to this work.* Our admiration is increased when we reflect that there was only one short day to prepare the purple patch—the answer to *Civis Romanus sum*. In the prelude the subject of Lord Palmerston's foreign policy is introduced and divided. Then the specific cases of Palmerston's high-handed interference, the cases of Don Pacifico and Mr. Finlay, are brought into view in their bearing on international law—a subject the importance of which "no words would exaggerate or even adequately express," though the restraints which it imposes might not please the occupants of the Ministerial benches, "or harmonise with their sense of their mission to propagate liberal opinions throughout the world." Of course, grievances must sometimes arise for which no legal remedy could be had from the tribunals of another country, and for which other remedies had to be sought. That subject was one of the utmost delicacy; but it need not detain them:—"I contend that in the cases before us Mr. Finlay and Mr. Pacifico did not exhaust, nor try to exhaust, the remedies which the laws of Greece supplied."

Mr. Gladstone's Reply.

It would be pleasant to pause at the point where Mr. Gladstone discusses Don Pacifico's claims, and contrasts the inventory of his furniture—the couch worth £170, the china dinner-service worth £140, etc.—with the fact that he had not (outside his jewels, his furniture, and his clothes) a single farthing except a little plate pledged to the Bank of Athens for £30. The man was a pauper in all other respects save this: that "there was not an ordinary article from the top to the bottom of his house. Everything in it was a specimen of the richest and rarest of its kind."

The orator lingers almost lovingly over the antithesis. Let us pass from the particular case of the astute pauper Jew, who knew so well "where his best market lay," to the general principle which Mr. Gladstone set up in answer to the challenge of the Jingoes. But before beginning the closing section of his speech, with its burning rhetoric of denunciation, he relieves the tension for a moment and indulges in a generosity of praise which only makes the subsequent censure more sweeping and irresistible. Bad as was the policy of Palmerston, they had had some compensation:—

"We had the compensation of hearing a great speech from the noble lord; and, Sir, I for one assure the House, that—as far as it goes—I do not undervalue that compensation. I respectfully assure the noble lord, if he will permit me, that no man who sits in this House can be more sensible of the masterly character of that speech, alike remarkable as a physical and an intellectual effort. No man, even of those who sit beside him, listened with keener admiration and delight, while from the dusk of one day until the dawn of the next, the noble lord defended his policy, and, through the live-long summer's night, the British House of Commons, crowded as it was, hung upon his lips."

What then was the antagonistic principle which Mr. Gladstone and his friends advanced to the rule of the Foreign Secretary's proceedings?

"I answer him in that one word to which I have referred; it is the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries. I subscribe to those declarations of general maxims which fell from him; everything depends upon the tone and

* See p. 46.

spirit of the man who has to act upon them. They are in themselves but vague abstractions; they acquire life and weight and vigour only as they take effect in administrative acts. Greatly as I respect, in general, the courage, the energy, the undaunted patriotism of the noble lord, I accuse him of this, that his policy is marked and characterised by what I must call a spirit of interference. I hold this to be a fundamental fault, a fault not to be excused. The noble lord tells us, indeed, that he does not go abroad to propagate extreme opinions in other countries. . . . No doubt he has the feeling, the feeling of every Englishman, a sincere desire that when a legitimate opportunity creates itself and makes it our duty, in conformity with the principles of public law, to exercise a British influence in the regulation of the affairs of other countries, that influence should be exercised in the spirit which we derive from our own free and stable form of government, and in the sense of extending to such countries, as far as they are able and desirous to receive them, institutions akin to those of which we know from experience the inestimable blessings."

On this there could be no difference of opinion; but then came the question—

"Are we, or are we not, to go abroad and *make* occasions for the propagation even of the political opinions which we consider to be sound? I say we are not. I complain of the noble lord that he is disposed to make these occasions; nay, he boasts that he makes them. . . . Sir, I object to the propagandism even of moderate reform. In proportion as the representation is alluring, let us be on our guard. . . . Interference in foreign countries, Sir, according to my mind, should be rare, deliberate, decisive in character, and effectual for its end. Success will usually show that you saw your way, and that the means you used were adapted and adequate to the purpose. Such, if I read these aright, were the acts done by Mr. Canning in the nature of intervention; they were few and they were effectual—effectual whether, when, in his own noble language, he 'called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old,' or when, founding himself on the obligations of public law, he despatched the troops of England to prevent the march of a Spanish force into Portugal."

Very different was the policy of Lord Palmerston. He was no true protector of Englishmen abroad and of the oppressed of other countries. He insinuated groundless suspicions in order to justify his policy. "In vain do you talk to us of a knot of foreign conspirators; the only knot of foreign conspirators against the noble lord is the combined opinion of civilised Europe." This brings Mr. Gladstone to the verge of his peroration :—

'And now I will grapple with the noble lord on the ground which he selected for himself, in the most triumphant portion of his speech, by his reference to those emphatic words, *Civis Romanus sum*. He vaunted, amidst the cheers of his supporters, that under his Administration an Englishman should be, throughout the world, what the citizen of Rome had been. What, then, Sir, was a Roman citizen? He was the member of a privileged caste; he belonged to a conquering race, to a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power. For him there was to be an exceptional system of law; for him principles were to be asserted, and by him rights were to be enjoyed, that were denied to the rest of the world. Is such, then, the view of the noble lord as to the relation which is to subsist between England and other countries? Does he make the claim for us that we are to be uplifted upon a platform high above the standing-ground of all other nations? It is, indeed, too clear, not only from the expressions, but from the whole tone of the speech of the noble viscount, that too much of this notion is lurking in his mind; that he adopts, in part, that vain conception that we, forsooth, have a mission to be the censors of vice and folly, of abuse and imperfection, among the other countries of the world; that we are to be the universal schoolmasters; and that all those who hesitate to recognise our office can be governed only by prejudice or personal animosity, and should have the blind war of diplomacy forthwith declared against them. And certainly, if the business of a Foreign Secretary properly were to

carry on diplomatic wars, all must admit that the noble lord is a master in the discharge of his functions. What, Sir, ought a Foreign Secretary to be? Is he to be like some gallant knight at a tournament of old, pricking forth into the lists, armed at all points, confiding in his sinews and his skill, challenging all comers for the sake of honour, and having no other duty than to lay as many as possible of his adversaries sprawling in the dust? If such is the idea of a good Foreign Secretary, I, for one, would vote to the noble

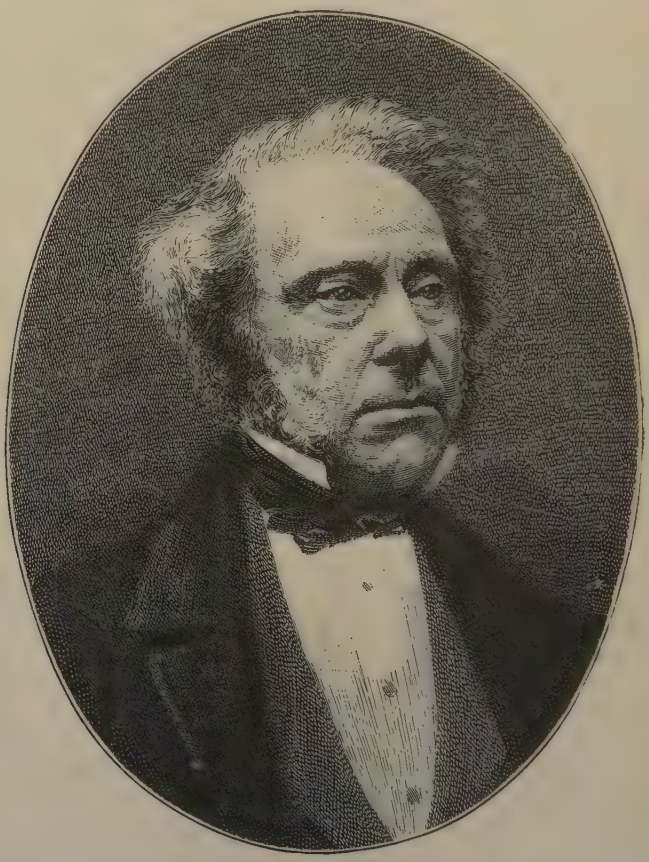


*Photo: Maull and Fox.*

LORD PALMERSTON.

lord his present appointment for his life. But, Sir, I do not understand the duty of a Secretary for Foreign Affairs to be of such a character. I understand it to be his duty to conciliate peace with dignity. I think it to be the very first of all his duties studiously to observe, and to exalt in honour above mankind, that great code of principles which is termed the law of nations, which the honourable and learned member for Sheffield has found, indeed, to be very vague in its nature, and greatly dependent on the discretion of each particular country, but in which I find, on the contrary, a great and noble monument of human wisdom, founded on the combined dictates of reason and experience, a precious inheritance bequeathed to us by the generations that have gone before us, and a firm foundation on which we must take care to build whatever it may be our part to

add to their acquisitions, if, indeed, we wish to maintain and to consolidate the brotherhood of nations and to promote the peace and welfare of the world.

. . . . . .

"Sir, I say the policy of the noble lord tends to encourage and confirm in us that which is our besetting fault and weakness, both as a nation and as individuals. Let an Englishman travel where he will as a private person, he is found in general to be upright, high-minded, brave, liberal, and true; but, with all this, foreigners are too often sensible of something that galls them in his presence, and I apprehend it is because he has too great a tendency to self-esteem—too little disposition to regard the feelings, the habits, and the ideas of others. Sir, I find this characteristic too plainly legible in the policy of the noble lord. I doubt not that use will be made of our present debate to work upon this peculiar weakness of the English mind. The people will be told that those who oppose the motion are governed by personal motives, have no regard for public principles, no enlarged ideas of national policy. You will take your case before a favourable jury, and you think to gain your verdict; but, Sir, let the House of Commons be warned—let it warn itself—against all illusions. There is in this case also a court of appeal. There is an appeal, such as the honourable and learned member for Sheffield has made, from the one House of Parliament to the other. There is a further appeal from this House of Parliament to the people of England; but, lastly, there is also an appeal from the people of England to the general sentiment of the civilised world; and I, for my part, am of opinion that England will stand shorn of a chief part of her glory and pride if she shall be found to have separated herself, through the policy she pursues abroad, from the moral support which the general and fixed convictions of mankind afford—if the day shall come when she may continue to excite the wonder and the fear of other nations, but in which she shall have no part in their affection and regard.

"No, Sir, let it not be so; let us recognise, and recognise with frankness, the equality of the weak with the strong; the principles of brotherhood among nations, and of their sacred independence. When we are asking for the maintenance of the rights which belong to our fellow-subjects resident in Greece, let us do as we would be done by, and let us pay all respect to a feeble State, and to the infancy of free institutions, which we should desire and should exact from others towards their maturity and their strength. Let us refrain from all gratuitous and arbitrary meddling in the internal concerns of other States, even as we should resent the same interference if it were attempted to be practised towards ourselves. If the noble lord has indeed acted on these principles, let the Government to which he belongs have your verdict in its favour; but if he has departed from them, as I contend, and as I humbly think and urge upon you that it has been too amply proved, then the House of Commons must not shrink from the performance of its duty under whatever expectations of momentary obloquy or reproach, because we shall have done what is right, we shall enjoy the peace of our own consciousness, and receive, whether a little sooner or a little later, the approval of the public voice for having entered our solemn protest against a system of policy which we believe—nay, which we know—whatever may be its first aspect, must of necessity in its final results be unfavourable even to the security of British subjects resident abroad, which it professes so much to study—unfavourable to the dignity of the country, which the motion of the honourable and learned member asserts it preserves—and equally unfavourable to that other great and sacred object, which also it suggests to our recollections, the maintenance of peace with the nations of the world."

Roebuck's motion in defence of the Government was carried on the following day, June 28th, 1850, by a large majority. A phrase like *Civis Romanus sum* in a foreign language is as effective with an average Englishman as a long word like Imperialism or Mesopotamia. And even in the minority there were many who voted merely from a party point of view. Certainly, the list of Noes is an extraordinary one, containing as it does, to mention no others, the names of Cobden, Disraeli, Gladstone, Milner Gibson, Villiers, Graham, Peel, Molesworth, Sibthorp, Bright and Inglis

The Division.

On the 29th of June, 1850, the day after the close of the Don Pacifico debate, Sir Robert Peel was thrown from his horse, and died a day or two later from the effects of the fall. Mr. Gladstone, in a funeral oration in the House of Commons, quoted with much feeling the lines written by Sir Walter Scott on the death of Pitt.* Peel had died full of years and full of honours, "yet it is a death which our human eyes will regard as premature because we had fondly hoped that in whatever position he was placed, by the weight of his character, by the splendour of his talents, by the purity of his virtues, he would still have been spared to render his country the most essential services."

Death of Sir Robert Peel, 1850.

In later days Mr. Gladstone seems to have thought that Peel's reputation as a statesman stood somewhat too high. His great failure was in his Irish policy, his great virtue "that he kept such an enormous conscience." Another of Peel's great qualities which Mr. Gladstone noticed, perhaps all the more because of his own relative deficiency in it, was his sense of measure. "He had generally an exact sense of the proportion between one Bill, and the general policy of the Government; also of the proportion between the different parts of the same Bill; and of the relation in which the leaders of his party stood to their followers." Mr. Gladstone appears to have acquiesced in the quantitative estimate of the "Dictionary of National Biography," which assigns twenty pages to Parnell and fifteen to Peel. On this scale he thought that Palmerston would deserve ten or twelve.†

Mr. Gladstone's Estimate of Peel.

To measure merit by pages is hard and perhaps unprofitable: certainly the scales have not yet been fashioned in which the heroic qualities of Peel and his greatest follower can be nicely checked and balanced. In each the sense of responsibility was equally great, but in the one it was primarily to the nation, the account of the other was rendered through the nation to a personal and jealous God. Both were open to conviction in different degrees, but in degrees which raised them out of the ruck of ordinary leaders; and their courageous willingness and extraordinary ability to interpret conviction into action sets them side by side on a pedestal almost lonely in its elevation. In one respect their careers offer a remarkable antithesis. Each in the days of his supremacy possessed a vast influence. But it was the individual whom Peel bent to his strong will; Mr. Gladstone exercised his political fascination over multitudes. Peel knew how to choose, instruct, and retain the loyal support of his lieutenants; and the little band of administrators whom he had gathered round him in 1841 clung tenaciously to his name and the traditions of his policy for nearly a decade after his death. Peel lacked those charms of manner and conversation which made Gladstone an ornament of society. Both were far too statesmanlike to appear to be original; and if, in this respect, the advantage seems to lie with Peel it is rather apparent than real. The plans of a simpler mind have a boldness of outline that gives a deceptive impression of originality.

The Two Leaders Compared.

* See *ante*, p. 83.

† *Cf.* "Talks with Mr. Gladstone," by the Hon. Lionel A. Tollemache, pp. 116, 126–128.

The illness of Mr. Gladstone's third daughter, Mary,* made it advisable to spend three or four months of the autumn and winter of 1850-51 in Naples. His thorough knowledge of Italian and his love of the people soon made him conversant with the iniquities of Neapolitan misgovernment. Thus, after a visit arranged without any idea of political censure, and with a strong predisposition—as the Don Pacifico speech plainly shows—against interfering in the domestic concerns of other nations, Mr. Gladstone returned

The Neapolitan Horrors, 1850-51.

RIVER VIEW OF THE HOUSE (MARKED BY ASTERISKS) IN WHICH SIR ROBERT PEEL DIED, NOW 4, WHITEHALL GARDENS.

*(From a Contemporary Drawing by T. H. Shepherd.)*

home "with a deep sense of the duty incumbent upon him to make some attempt towards mitigating the horrors amidst which the government of that country was then carried on."

The famous letters to Lord Aberdeen, based upon his researches, need not detain the biographer. They ran into many editions and were translated into many languages; and they are now to be found reprinted in the fourth volume of the "Gleanings." One thing must not be forgotten: the picture which they present to us of that "hell on earth," that "negation of God created into a system of government," is not a mere piece of word painting: it is the result of personal investigation,

* The child recovered, and was thenceforth called in the family circle "Mary Naples."

of the drudgery of an ex-Cabinet Minister in the cause of suffering humanity. These Neapolitan researches and their publication form a supreme example of effective alliance between practical pity and practical courage. Never did the brave heart, the sensitive brain, the conscience righteously indignant, more loyally and devotedly co-operate. Take one specimen of the narrative, and consider the hazard which these experiences involved for a father, a husband, a statesman with a brilliant future before him :—

"And how were these *detenuti* treated during the long and awful period of apprehension and dismay between their illegal seizure and their illegal trial? The prisons of Naples were another name for the extreme of filth and horror. I really saw something of them, but not the worst. This I have seen, my Lord: the official doctors not going to the sick prisoners, but the sick prisoners, men almost with death in their faces, toiling upstairs to them at that charnel-house of the Vicaria, because the lower regions of such a palace of darkness were too foul and loathsome to allow it to be expected that professional men should consent to earn bread by entering them. As to diet, I must speak a word for the bread that I saw. Though black and coarse to the last degree, it was sound. The soup, which formed the only other element of subsistence, was so nauseous, as I was assured, that nothing but the extreme of hunger could overcome the repugnance of nature to it. I had not the means of tasting it. The filth of the prisons was beastly. The officers, except at night, hardly ever entered them. I was ridiculed for reading with some care pretended regulations posted up on the wall of an outer room. One of them was for the visit of the doctors to the sick. I saw the doctors with that regulation over them, and men with one foot in the grave visiting them, not visited by them. I have walked among a crowd of three and four hundred Neapolitan prisoners; murderers, thieves, all kinds of ordinary criminals, some condemned and some uncondemned, and the political accused indiscriminately: not a chain upon a man of them, not an officer nearer than at the end of many apartments, with many locked doors and gratings between us; but not only was there nothing to dread, there was even a good deal of politeness to me as a stranger."

With this visit began a long and uninterrupted friendship with Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Lacaita, from whose recollections—thanks to the enterprise of an Austrian gentleman—we are enabled to draw some picturesque details of Mr. Gladstone's stay at Naples :—

**Sir James Lacaita's Recollections.**

"It was in the late autumn of 1850. I was not quite forty years old at that time, and was living in Naples. As legal adviser to the British Embassy, I used to go about a great deal in the English colony. One evening I was dining with Lord Leven. Among the guests was Gladstone. . . . After dinner he drew me into a corner, and we talked till midnight about literature and politics. Gladstone's catholic spirit distributed itself over these two hemispheres of public life. . . . We met constantly at the house of the Ambassador Temple, a brother of Lord Palmerston. In the evenings we used to pace for hours in the Villa Reale. Gladstone was casting off under the Italian sky the last chain that bound him to his Tory past. He had long since given up Protection; and as he no longer wanted Protection for the English "Hoch-industrie," neither was he any more an orthodox advocate of the English "Hoch-kirche."

Then follows an interesting sketch of the "cold despotism" of King Bomba, with the official murders and imprisonments and other tragic horrors of that Domitian age. The English student of the classics was daily seeing and hearing cruelties such as he had hitherto only read of in Suetonius and Tacitus; and when the day was over, "under the acacias and palms, between the fountains and statues of the Villa Reale, we wandered at our pleasure, turning our eyes now to the sea, now to

the world of fashion in the Corso, and talked of the horrors of the day. Gladstone, who was full of belief in progress, comforted me with hopes of better days. 'Night would not always lie over Naples; the reactionary movement would spend its force.'" At Christmas Lacaita was himself thrown into prison. On his release Mr. Gladstone asked Lacaita to allow him to rehearse the Open Letter to Lord Aberdeen; if he heard a word that was false or exaggerated he was to lift up a finger. "So Gladstone read in his sonorous voice, which sounded to me like a bell that would proclaim to all Europe the horrors of Neapolitan misrule. His heart beat in sympathy. I listened with bated breath. Not once had I occasion to protest against an incorrect fact or a wrong impression. . . . His study of 'Darkest Naples' had been thorough. Palmerston could justly say in Parliament that Mr. Gladstone, not content with enjoying the carnival and visiting Vesuvius and Pompeii, had investigated the law courts and the gaols and sought out the victims of an unrighteous justice, in order to lay before all Europe proof of these outrageous attacks upon humanity." *

On his return from Naples Mr. Gladstone informed Lord Aberdeen, his chief political friend, that he intended to proclaim the sufferings of the political prisoners at Naples. The ex-Foreign Secretary, however, promised, if Mr. Gladstone would delay publication, to use his influence with the Austrian Government, then the external prop of Neapolitan tyranny. "Lord Aberdeen," said Mr. Gladstone more than thirty years later, "united as he was with me in friendship and affection, and being possessed of great influence over Continental Governments, did me the great favour to endeavour through the Austrian Government to give friendly effect to my remonstrances and statements; *and when he entirely failed, as I think, in that purpose*, my appeal was made not to any Government—not to the House of Commons—never did I say one word in that House on the subject; but it was made entirely to the public opinion of Europe through the medium of the Press." †

The italicised words mark a difference of opinion between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Aberdeen. The latter thought he had been rather badly used. He applied to Prince Schwarzenberg "as an old friend of the Austrian Government." But no answer came for some time. Meanwhile—so he wrote to the Princess Lieven—

"Mr. Gladstone began to grow impatient. I did not hear from Prince Schwarzenberg, and he concluded that no attention would be paid to my letter. I had written in May and we were in the month of July; he proposed, therefore, to publish without further delay. I remonstrated against this, and told him it would place me in a very false position with respect to Prince Schwarzenberg. I thought he was bound to wait for the Prince's answer, and if that was unfavourable, he might then do as he pleased. I got him to delay another fortnight; but at last, in spite of my remonstrances, he sent his letter to the Press. *Two days* after the publication, Count Buol arrived, bringing me a long letter from Prince Schwarzenberg, in which, after discussing at length the conditions and claims of political offenders, he says that, had any official application been made to him, he should have felt it his duty to decline all interference; but that

* Italienische Reminiscenzen und Profile, von Sigmund Münz, Wien, 1898, pp. 248-257 Herr Münz visited Sir James Lacaita in April, 1894. Sir James had then just received a delightful letter from Mrs. Gladstone.

† Hansard, March 3rd, 1882.

he would confidentially and privately take measures to comply with my wishes; and this he was the better able to do, as I had been the means of suspending Gladstone's appeal to the public."

It was well for humanity and Italy that Mr. Gladstone was two days too soon, and that the appeal was made to the civilised world rather than to the "private and confidential measures" of Austrian bureaucracy, which was not likely to make extraordinary efforts in the suppression of a system similar to, though more outrageous than, that for which it was itself directly responsible in northern Italy. Lord Aberdeen was somewhat annoyed: "I have certainly much reason to complain of Gladstone; but he is so honest and so perfectly sincere, and we are both personally and politically connected so closely, that, although I have not concealed my feelings from him, it is impossible for me to entertain any resentment."*

The Parliamentary session of 1851 found Lord John Russell's Government in difficulties. The Peelites were an even more uncertain quantity than ever. On February 13th Disraeli nearly beat the Whigs by a motion in favour of relieving agricultural distress. Mr. Gladstone, embarrassed by his speech of the previous year, neither spoke nor voted. Graham, Cardwell, and Herbert supported the Government. At the end of February Lord John Russell resigned, but returned when neither Lord Derby nor Lord Aberdeen was able to form a Ministry. "The Earl of Derby," said Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, recalling the incident on March 3rd, 1882, "applied to me in 1851 to unite with him in the Government. Our communications on that point terminated on his informing me that he was desirous of imposing a moderate fixed duty on corn. The noble lord said that it was not his intention to reverse the policy of Free Trade, but to modify it. I was opposed alike to a reversal or modification of that policy."

**Lord John Russell Resigns, 1851.**

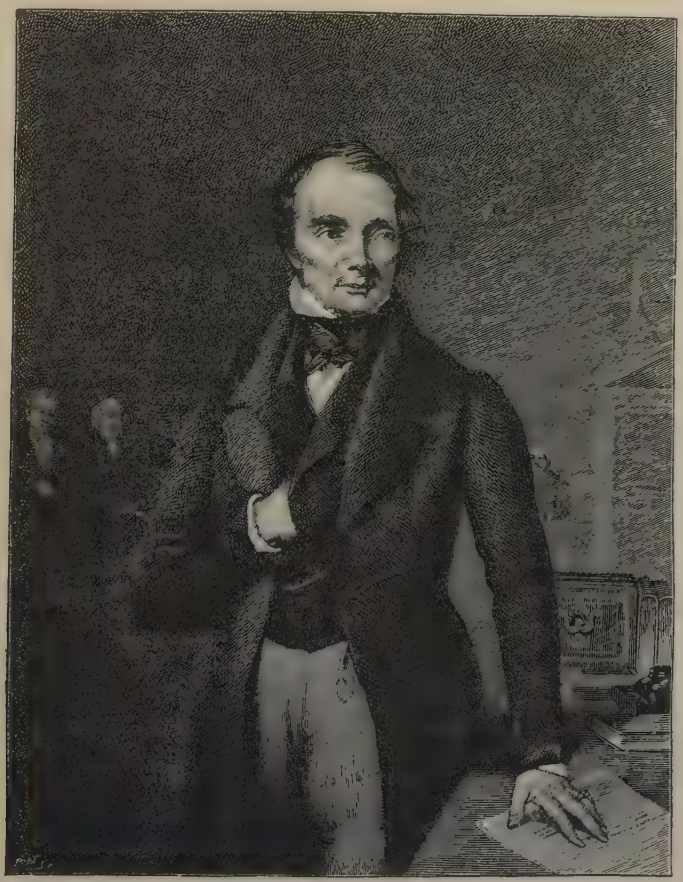
On resuming office Lord John Russell introduced his Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and Mr. Gladstone, "in company with the Peelites, the Irish Roman Catholics, and the group led by Mr. Cobden . . . actively resisted both Whigs and Tories, but the last especially, in defence of religious liberty." This miserable Bill, ushered into the House by the enormous majority of 395 to 63, was originally due to Papal Letters for mapping out England into Roman dioceses, and to the No-Popery agitation which had resulted. Lord John Russell's Durham letter fanned the flames; and the Bill was devised to turn Protestant indignation into law. Mr. Gladstone, in a "magnificent" speech—the epithet is Greville's—opposed the measure because it taught religion to rely on other support than that of the spiritual strength and vitality which could alone give it vigour; because its tendency was to undermine and weaken the authority of the law in Ireland; because it was disparaging to the great principle of religious freedom, "on which this wise and understanding people has permanently built its legislation of late years"; and lastly, because it tended "to relax and destroy those bonds of concord and good-will which ought to unite all classes and persuasions of her Majesty's subjects."†

**The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.**

* Lord Aberdeen's biographer regards it as "a somewhat curious episode." *Vide* Lord Stanmore's Life of Aberdeen, pp. 203–205.

† Hansard, July 4th, 1851.

The introduction of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill had the effect of drawing the Peelites together, and of postponing, what Lord John Russell in the spring of this year vainly tried to bring about, their coalition with the Whigs. Lord Stanmore has pointed out the curious circumstance that in the winter of the same year, without any previous communication or knowledge of each other's sentiments, "Lord Aberdeen,



LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

(*From the Painting by T. Carrick*, 1844.)

Sir James Graham, the Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Sidney Herbert each came independently to the conclusion that the line taken by Lord John Russell in meeting what was called Papal aggression, and in which he was supported by the vast majority of the nation, was one inconsistent with the true principles of religious liberty, and must be firmly opposed, at whatever sacrifice of popularity, and at the cost of a breach with a Government with which they were, on the

whole, in sympathy."* Which may fairly be taken to indicate that the Peelite party did not owe its continued existence entirely to the accident of personal connection.

When Sir Charles Wood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, brought in his second and revised Budget, the Protectionists made yet another effort. On April 11th Disraeli moved that "in any relief to be granted by the remission or adjustment of taxation, due regard should be paid to the distressed condition of the owners and occupiers of land in the United Kingdom." Labouchere replied, and Mr. Gladstone followed in a remarkably interesting speech, in which he (1) explains as best he can the vote which he gave for Disraeli's very similar motion in the preceding session; (2) attacks Wood's Budget; (3) declares that the Budget proposed by Disraeli is even worse than that proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that he will therefore vote against the motion. Mr. Gladstone's help —though reluctantly given—saved the Whigs.

Protectionist Activity, 1851.

In May the popular wind created by the opening of the Great Exhibition caught the sails of the Government ship, and enabled it to crawl along for a few months longer. In July the debates on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill were resumed; but when at length it received the Royal assent, its form was so attenuated, and its Protestant vigour so abated, that Lord John himself admitted the aptness of Leech's famous cartoon — "The Boy who chalked up 'No Popery,' and then ran away." The Act remained a dead letter; and twenty years later, when Mr. Gladstone had the satisfaction of removing it from the statute-book, not a voice was raised in its defence.

The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill Passed.

At the end of the recess the Ministry suffered a fatal blow. Lord John Russell, in compliance with the Queen's wishes, dismissed Lord Palmerston from office for expressing to the French ambassador his approval of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*; but a few weeks later Lord Palmerston carried an amendment to a local militia Bill, and so had his "tit for tat"† with Lord John Russell.

Dismissal of Lord Palmerston, 1851.

In February, 1852, Lord Derby had succeeded Lord John Russell as Prime Minister, and Disraeli anticipated his rival by one year as Chancellor of the Exchequer and by thirteen years as leader of the House of Commons. The position of the Peelites was peculiar. Sir James Graham inclined to an alliance with Lord John Russell. Mr. Gladstone and Sidney Herbert still clung to the hope that they might take, or rather keep, their position on the Liberal wing of the Conservative party. The hope, however, was speedily upset by Lord Derby himself, who went to the country with "No Popery" and "Protection." The elections showed that the Conservatives without the Peelites would be in a small minority; and on July 21st, 1852, when the elections were nearly over, Lord John Russell wrote to Lord Aberdeen to propose a friendly concert between the Whigs and Peelites. After suggesting that they should co-operate in a Free Trade resolution and an attack upon the corruption practised by

Position of the Peelites, 1852.

* "Life of Lord Aberdeen," p. 198.

† "I have had," he said in his colloquial way, "my tit for tat with Johnny Russell, and I turned him out on Friday last."

the Tories at the late elections, he goes on to say: "The main point is to ascertain whether Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert would be disposed with you and the Duke of Newcastle* to concert with the Whigs the course to be adopted when Parliament meets." On August 28th he wrote to Lansdowne: "Mr. Gladstone is strongly for Free Trade, but evidently wishes it to be in the keeping of the Protectionist party."

THIS IS THE BOY WHO CHALKED UP "NO POPERY!"—AND THEN RAN AWAY!!!

*(Reduction of Leech's Cartoon in "Punch." By courtesy of Messrs. Bradbury & Agnew.)*

It was not likely that the Peelites, who found themselves holding the balance between the two parties when the elections were over, would care to return to the Tory fold. An important correspondence had been passing between the leading Peelites, Lord Aberdeen, and Lord John Russell during the whole summer, by which a compromise was at last effected. It required all Aberdeen's tact to smooth away the difficulties between Gladstone and Russell, the one objecting to reform, and cherishing his old half-political, half-religious hostility to the Whigs, while the other, though anxious to effect a compromise, was nettled by some of Gladstone's observations. To Russell Aberdeen wrote: "I am sorry you should have felt some displeasure at Gladstone's remarks, although I cannot say it is surprising that you should have done so; but you must forgive him for repeating sentiments which we have all of us been in the habit of

**Coalition with the Whigs.**

* Lord Lincoln had succeeded to the dukedom in 1851.

constantly expressing for years. . . . Gladstone possesses so much that is excellent and amiable in character that you may be fully persuaded, if it should ever be your fate to act together, you will find in him nothing but frankness and cordiality."

Who was to be the head of the coalition? Could Peel's friends supply the place? General opinion seemed to be coming round to Lord Aberdéen. His immense caution, and perhaps his unpopularity, seemed to fit him for the management of a Coalition Ministry. His caution comes out in a letter to Mr. Gladstone :—

"If high character and ability alone were required, *you* would be the person; but I am aware that, at present at least, this would not be practicable. Whether it would be possible for Newcastle or me to undertake the concern I cannot say; but I am sure that it must be essentially with Liberal support, and with little chance of accessions from the Protectionist camp. . . . I am not afraid of the effects of reform, and I have no doubt the abuses are sufficiently great to justify those who seek for change."

Mr. Gladstone's seat at Oxford had been again assailed, in spite of the many proofs which he had given since 1847 of his Conservative tendencies. He seems also to have assured his friends in the University that he hoped to give a general support to Lord Derby's Administration; for he had persuaded himself that the country had benefited by the change of Government, and that the Colonies, in which he continued to take a great interest, were being better administered. But the negotiations between Whigs and Peelites had been successful, and the Government was doomed to perish by a friendly hand. In order to postpone defeat, Disraeli swallowed a bitter pill—a Free Trade resolution. After this there seemed nothing unreasonable in the hope that Mr. Gladstone, "the dark horse" of the political speculators of that day, might be induced to join the Government. Doyle may be right in thinking that the fusion would have taken place but for one man. After Peel's death Disraeli's presence "established a line of demarcation between the two portions of the Tory party. Had it not been for his being fixed across their path, I think Mr. Gladstone, Herbert, and the other Peelites would have joined Lord Derby instead of becoming Whigs."

**Disraeli's Budget, 1852.**

But though Disraeli's digestion had been equal to the Free Trade resolution, Mr. Gladstone could not tolerate his rival's finance. A Budget was produced on the 3rd of December. When the House had gone into committee the Opposition showed a disposition to combine against the whole scheme as soon as the first resolution for an extension and increase of the house tax had been proposed. On the fourth night of the debate (December 16th) Disraeli rose to reply, and made a powerful but offensive speech, bristling with personalities, sarcasms, and epigrams, not a few of which were aimed at prominent Peelites.

When Disraeli sat down it was already one o'clock in the morning. Mr. Gladstone bounded * to his feet, and beginning with an indignant and even furious onslaught upon the Minister for the personalities which

* "1832 itself," says Sir George Trevelyan, "could boast few more animated and exciting scenes than that which was enacted during the first three hours in the morning of the 17th of December, 1852; when the Tory leader, more formidable than ever in the audacity of despair, turned to bay in defence of his doomed Budget; and when, at the moment

had disfigured his speech and violated the decencies of debate, rushed triumphantly upon figures and calculations, dissected the Budget, and destroyed the Ministry. It was nearly four o'clock in the morning when the numbers were read out: For the Government, 286; against, 305. The Ministers thus found themselves in a minority of 19, and immediately resigned.

The success of Mr. Gladstone's speech, following on the adoption by the Derbyites of a Free Trade resolution, marks the overthrow—for nearly two generations—of agricultural or "Protectionist" finance in Great Britain. It is also the prelude to the coming conflict between the forces of progress and reaction under the leadership of Gladstone and Disraeli.

Under date Friday, December 23rd, Greville writes that there is nothing new in the purlieus of Whiggism, but that the Derbyites are "quite frenzied." The story illustrating this (which he copied from his morning paper) is well known, and in the main, at any rate, true:—

"The other day twenty ruffians of the Carlton Club gave a dinner there to Beresford, to celebrate what they consider his acquittal! After dinner, when they got drunk, they went upstairs, and finding Gladstone alone in the drawing-room, some of them proposed to throw him out of the window. This they did not quite dare to do, but contented themselves with giving some insulting message or order to the waiter, and then went away."

"Mr. Gladstone," said the *Times* in its first leading article on the same day, "has had the misfortune of belonging to a society to which persons were admitted ignorant or regardless of the decencies of life."

**The Aberdeen Ministry, 1852.**

While the Tories were raging over their defeat, "The Government of All the Talents," including Peelites, Whigs, and one Radical—Sir William Molesworth—was in process of formation. The very strength of the Government was a source of weakness. "In the present Cabinet," says Grenville, "are five or six first-rate men of equal or nearly equal pretensions, none of them likely to acknowledge the superiority or defer to the opinions of any other, and everyone of these five or six considering himself abler or more important than their Premier."

The following is a list of the Cabinet Ministers *:—

| | |
|---|---|
| EARL OF ABERDEEN ... ... ... ... | First Lord of the Treasury and |
| LORD CRANWORTH ... ... ... ... | Lord Chancellor. [Prime Minister. |
| EARL GRANVILLE ... ... ... ... | Lord President of the Council. |
| THE DUKE OF ARGYLL ... ... ... | Lord Privy Seal. |
| MR. GLADSTONE ... ... ... ... ... | Chancellor of the Exchequer. |
| VISCOUNT PALMERSTON ... ... ... | Home Secretary of State. |
| THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE ... ... ... | Secretary for Colonies. |
| LORD JOHN RUSSELL ... ... ... ... | Foreign Secretary. |
| SIR JAMES GRAHAM ... ... ... ... | First Lord of the Admiralty. |
| MR. SIDNEY HERBERT ... ... ... ... | Secretary at War. |
| SIR CHARLES WOOD ... ... ... ... | President of the Indian Board. |
| SIR WILLIAM MOLESWORTH ... ... ... | First Commissioner of Works. |
| THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE ... ... | [No Office]. |

that friends and foes alike thought that the last word had been spoken on either side, Mr. Gladstone bounded on to the floor amidst a storm of cheering and counter-cheering such as the walls of Parliament have never re-echoed since, and plunged straight into the heart of an oration which, in a single day, doubled his influence in Parliament and his popularity in the country."—"Life of Macaulay," chapter xiii.

* A fine engraving of this Cabinet, reproduced on page 377, is to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery, with the signature of each member attached.

There was some objection to Mr. Gladstone being made Chancellor of the Exchequer on the ground that he had committed himself on the income-tax. At Oxford his re-election was violently opposed; but he was returned by a majority of 124 over Perceval. It should be observed, however, in apology for his Oxford opponents, that this conjunction with Russell and Molesworth was what opened the eyes of many Oxford Tories to the growth of his Liberalism. Of these Archdeacon Denison was most prominent; nor did that great dignitary underestimate his own importance, if we may judge from the following letter, written on Christmas Day, 1852, and published by Perceval's Committee:—

**Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor.**

"MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—The day on which I make this communication to you adds more than I can express in words to my deep pain and to my sense of responsibility in making it. After a week of anxious suspense, the fact of the existence of a Coalition Government—*i.e.* of a Government in which you are joined with Lord John Russell—with Lord Lansdowne in the Cabinet*—may be said to be ascertained.

**A Letter from Archdeacon Denison.**

"I wish to use few words where every one I write is so bitterly distressing to me, and must, I cannot doubt, be little less so to yourself, and to many others whom I respect and love.

"I have, then, to state to you that from this time I can place no confidence in you as a representative of the University of Oxford, or as a public man.

* * * * * * * *

"I reserve to myself the right of forwarding this letter for publication by Tuesday's post, and also any reply which you may make to it. I will only say, by way of anticipation, that any amount of guarantee which may have been taken by you, in accepting office in the new Government, for non-aggression upon the Church of England, or for the concession of her just claims, is, in my judgment, absolutely valueless when weighed against the fact of the Coalition.—Faithfully and affectionately yours,

"GEORGE A. DENISON,
"Archdeacon of Taunton.

"The Rt. Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, M.P."

From the frenzy which arose among the Oxford Tories when they heard that their member had entered a Cabinet containing several Whigs and a stray Radical, it might be imagined that Mr. Gladstone had definitely committed himself to a popular policy. That this was very far from being the case may be shown quite easily and briefly by a reference to his relations with Stafford Northcote. In December, 1852, just after joining the Coalition Government, Mr. Gladstone had sounded Northcote as to whether he would be willing to serve on a commission for reorganising the Board of Trade. Northcote replied: "I am rather a stiff Conservative, and do not feel at all sure that the next Administration will be one that I can work under, though if you form a leading element in it I can scarcely imagine my having any doubts." Eventually, after "a long and desperate argument," Northcote's scruples were satisfied, and Mr. Gladstone provided him with a great deal of work in the revision of packet contracts, and in the organisation of that first great instalment of Civil Service reform in which he was so honourably associated with Sir Charles Trevelyan and backed by Lord Macaulay With regard to this, Northcote wrote to Lady Northcote, March 2nd,

**Gladstone and Stafford Northcote.**

* Sir William Molesworth's acceptance of office, with a seat in the Cabinet, presents the Coalition under *one more* aspect.

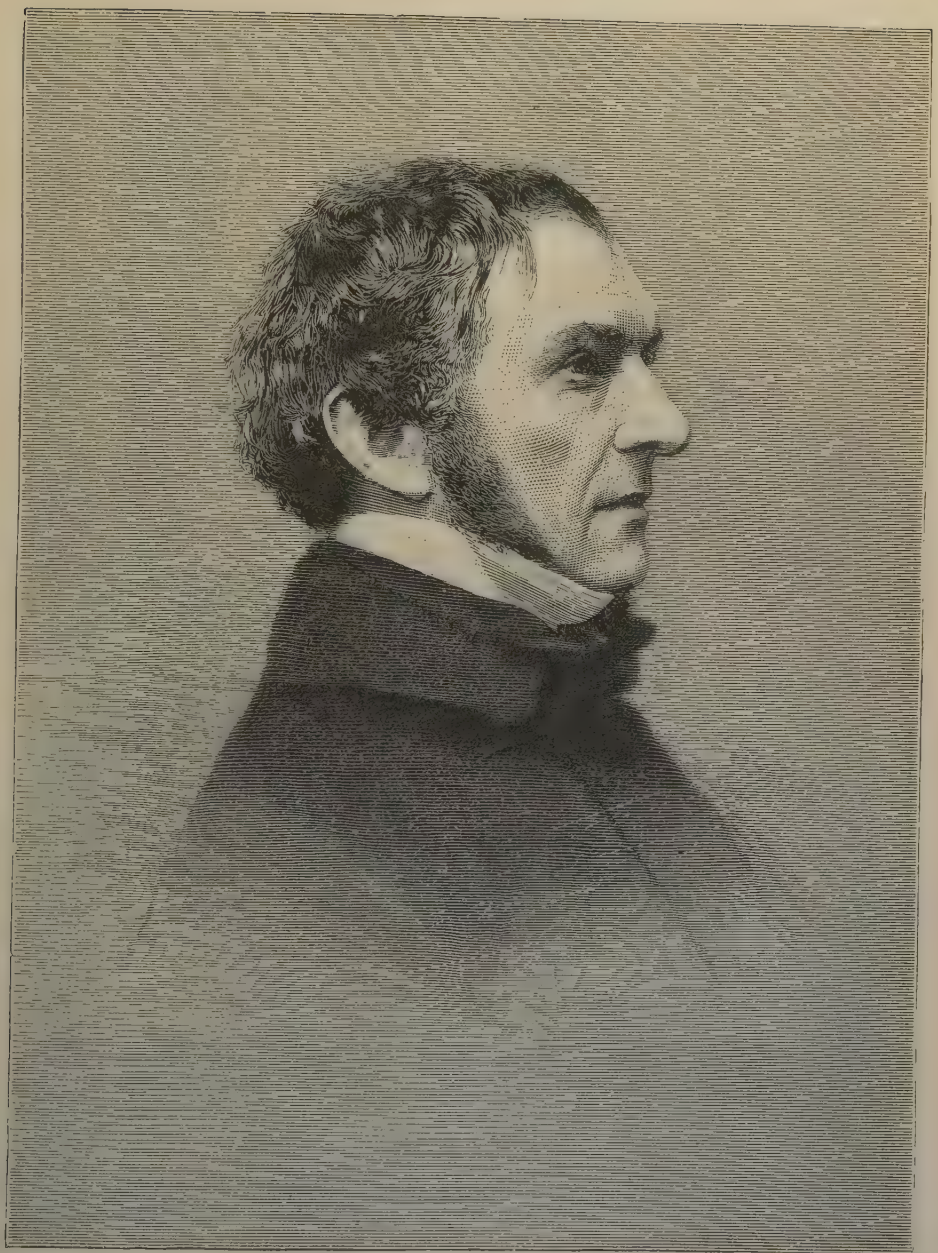


*Photo: Samuel A. Walker.*

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1852.

1854: "Gladstone relies so much on me that I must not desert him till it is fairly over," and a year later Mr. Gladstone exerted himself successfully to secure Northcote a seat in the House of Commons, where he took his place as a moderate Conservative.

We shall reserve a consideration of the Great Budget speech, and of the financial principles which it involved, for the next chapter, when it will be possible to take a synoptic view of the policy of perhaps the greatest of our very few great financial Ministers—a policy which, marked generally by consistency, perseverance, and determination, also exhibits one or two weaknesses which, striking enough in themselves, have been monstrously exaggerated by Tory philosophers and Tory orators. It will be enough in this place to indicate the additional weight and reputation which accrued to Mr. Gladstone as the direct result of his Budget speech. It was delivered on April the 18th.

**Mr. Gladstone's First Budget, 1853.**

The applause was almost universal. Letters of congratulation came to Mr. Gladstone from the Queen and Prince Albert; his friends began to write and talk and think of him as Aberdeen's future successor. Such, indeed, was the intention of the Prime Minister; but fortune was making other arrangements. Two years later the leader of the Peelite party found himself destitute of political capital, with nothing but failure and unpopularity to bequeath to his unfortunate heir.

The great Peace Budget was passed at the end of June; but already in May events in the East were beginning to excite hope or fear in the minds of the well informed. For some time Russia had been preparing to adopt a policy of expansion, which brought her into immediate antagonism with Austria and France. The Greek Christians in Turkey and the Holy Land were to be released from the intermittent barbarities of the Sultan in order to be subsumed under the regimental despotism of the Czar. French interests in Syria seemed to be threatened by Muscovite designs upon the Holy Places, and Austria—then, as now, the trembling rival of Russia for the protectorate, or rather directorate, of the Southern Slavs—was alarmed by Prince Mentschikoff's pretensions to a suzerainty over the Greek Christian subjects of the Porte.

**Trouble Brewing in the East.**

No British interest was involved or simulated; for military ingenuity had not yet conjured up in all its terrors the favourite bogey—an invasion of India.

The Cabinet was divided, the Peelites, excepting Newcastle, being inclined for peace and opposed to intervention. But Palmerston had convinced himself of the advantage, that is to say of the popularity, of war. His judgment was only too correct. The infection, skilfully diffused by a Palmerstonian press, spread rapidly enough; and the Peelites, who were always too apt to regard administration as the prime end of politics, weakly perhaps, but from the best motives, consented to remain and help to row the boat, so sharing the responsibility after they had lost control of the helm. There were only two policies open, Palmerstonian and Cobdenite; the policy of intervention and the policy of neutrality. The Peelites failed to see this, and suffered for their failure.

It must be remembered that the ignorance of the English people about foreign nations, their institutions, their manners, and their aspirations,

was much denser in the early fifties than it is now. The ideas of simple courage, trustful generosity, and almost misplaced humanity still attached to the Turk, and Lord Palmerston accurately reflected popular feeling when he complained of the Czar's unreasonableness in "refusing to be satisfied, *as we all are*, with the progressively liberal system of Turkey."*

The Turk.

Mr. Gladstone was already free from this insane and almost universal delusion. But one who had been so long a member of the governing classes could not so easily cast off the superstitions of an *arrière* diplomacy. Twenty years later he began to realise in full what Cobden had seen twenty years earlier—the bankruptcy, the inhumanity, the debility, the senility, and the impossibility of the Turkish Empire. His subtle mind was already beginning to analyse its "integrity." But before the analysis was complete the country was at war.

On Wednesday, October 12th, 1853, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone were present at the inauguration of a statue of Sir Robert Peel at Manchester. After the uncovering of the monument, the Mayor introduced the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the "most able and consistent supporter" of Sir Robert Peel "during his arduous struggle for commercial freedom." Mr. Gladstone made a short but eloquent speech, in which he described himself as the pupil and follower in politics of the dead statesman, and pointed to Peel's example as a proof that in this country "the road to duty is the road to fame." The ceremony took place in the morning. Shortly after one o'clock addresses were presented in the Town Hall, and Mr. Gladstone spoke for an hour in reply. He touched upon the Russo-Turkish question, and warned the people of Manchester against "the glare of glory about the operations of war" which blinds us to its terrible accompaniments:—

A Tribute to Peel, 1853.

> "When we speak of general war we don't mean real progress on the road of freedom, the real moral and social advancement of man, achieved by force. This may be the intention, but how rarely is it the result, of general war! We mean this—that the face of nature is stained with human gore—we mean that bread is taken out of the mouth of the people—we mean that taxation is increased and industry diminished—we know that it means that burdens unreasonable and untold are entailed on posterity—we know that it means that demoralisation is let loose, that families are broken up, that lusts become unbridled in every country to which that war is extended."

The Horrors of War.

He pointed out that the phrase "independence and integrity" as applied to the Ottoman Empire was not to be interpreted as if one were speaking of France or England. He described the Ottoman Empire as a sovereignty "full of anomaly, full of misery, and full of difficulty," as "a political solecism of the Mahommedan faith exercising what may be called a despotism, but what I will only call a domination over twelve millions of our fellow Christians." The Government could not allow "an absorption of power" by Russia; but he urged patience:—

> "The way of peace and negotiation is undoubtedly devoid of that romantic interest which attaches to heroic achievements in war. It is beset and clogged with delays and

* It should in fairness be added that there were at this time superficial signs of improvement in Turkey, thanks to the efforts of Reshid Pasha, the reforming Minister, and to the representations of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.

intrigue and chicane. But if the result is the saving of the effusion of human blood, and the averting that calamity which would disturb the operations of industry and deprive nations of their subsistence, surely the sacrifice is small and surely the reward is adequate."

The Paper Duty, 1853.

Before concluding his speech Mr. Gladstone touched upon another and far more congenial topic. The lips of a Chancellor of the Exchequer were "hermetically sealed," and therefore, even on the question of the paper duty, he had "very little to say"; but his words, though few, gave a sufficiently plain indication of his intentions:—

"I had the pleasure of seeing in a warehouse yesterday that beautiful manipulation performed which constitutes the process of packing goods for exportation; and it was impossible not to observe in the package, which was put in order before my eyes, that there was a very considerable quantity of paper, perhaps ten pounds or fifteen pounds of paper. That paper is liable to an excise duty of three-halfpence per pound: and it was perfectly obvious to me that three-halfpence per pound laid upon the paper might, so far as the practical operation of the duty is concerned, as well have been laid on the commodities themselves. It has precisely the same operation; and therefore, undoubtedly, the principle which has led Parliament to exempt the great manufactures of the country in themselves from the extremely impolitic and onerous operation of excise duties is perfectly capable of extension, when the proper time arrives and circumstances permit it (laughter and cheers), to the material in which the staple manufactures are wrapped up." *

How much satisfaction this speech gave to the Liberal stalwarts of the Manchester school may be judged by Bright's comments in the House of Commons in the following spring:—

Bright on Gladstone.

"When the Chancellor of the Exchequer entered office, doubtless he hoped by great services to his country to build up a reputation such as a man may labour for and live for. Every man in this House, even those most opposed to him, acknowledged the remarkable capacity which he displayed during the last session; and the country has set its seal to this—that his financial measures in the remission and adjustment of taxation were worthy of the approbation of the great body of the people. The right hon. gentleman has been blamed for his speech at Manchester, not for making the speech, but because it differed from the tone of the speech made by the noble Lord (Palmerston), his colleague in office, at Greenock. I observed that difference. There can be no doubt that there has been, and that there is now, a great difference of opinion in the Cabinet on this Eastern question. It could not be otherwise. Our Government has gone on from one step to another. They have drifted—to use the happy expression of Lord Clarendon to describe what is so truly unhappy—they have drifted from a state of peace to a state of war. And to no member of the Government could this state of things be more distressing than to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; for it dashed from him the hopes he entertained that session after session, as trade extended and the public revenue increased, he would find himself the beneficent dispenser of blessings to the poor, and, indeed, to all classes of people of this kingdom."

Bright thought that the burden of the war would have to be borne by real property and the country gentlemen: "I will undertake to say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will prefer to leave that bench, and will take his seat in some other quarter of the House, rather than retrace the steps which Sir Robert Peel took in 1842. He is not the promoter of this war; his speeches have shown that he is anxious for

* *Times*, October 13th, 1853.

THE ABERDEEN CABINET DECIDING UPON THE EXPEDITION TO THE CRIMEA.

*(After the Drawing by Sir John Gilbert.)*

peace," and he would not consent "to be made the instrument to re-impose upon the country the excise duties which have been repealed, or the import duties which, in past times, inflicted such enormous injury on trade." Thus justly confident, Bright was able to turn with magnificent irony upon the territorials who now, for the first time, were to wage war at their own expense, and to have the opportunity of paying as well as of shouting for "the integrity and independence" of the Ottoman Empire: "Gentlemen, I congratulate you that every man of you has a Turk upon his shoulders!" *

Negotiating War, 1853.

Meanwhile war was being slowly negotiated into existence. A brilliant passage in Kinglake† explains how from the beginning of the negotiations until the final rupture, during the session of 1853 and the autumn which followed it, the mere continuance of Lord Aberdeen and of Mr. Gladstone in office was regarded throughout the country as a guarantee that, if it were possible to maintain peace, peace would be maintained. Thus the efforts of the uncompromising advocates of peace were paralysed. "None but a bold man could say that the war was needless or wicked whilst Mr. Gladstone was feeding it with his own hand." That the Peelites ought on several distinct occasions to have made a more resolute stand will hardly be disputed now. It is said that Lord Aberdeen himself afterwards admitted and deplored the weakness of his resistance to the war mania. But the current of popular sentiment was well-nigh irresistible; and it seems probable that Kinglake's verdict will be accepted as the verdict of history: "The errors of Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Gladstone were only errors of judgment. The scrupulous purity of their motives has never been brought in question."

The Peace Party in the Cabinet.

The apology for Lord Aberdeen has already been set forth at some length and with much ability;‡ and in it may be included the necessarily subordinate part played by his Chancellor of the Exchequer. One remark should be added, a remark that is applicable to each of the great difficulties which perplex and vex the admirer of Mr. Gladstone's political career. It is this, that the rough and ready judgment is almost certainly the wrong one. The more patient your historical inquiry, the more subtle your intellectual analysis, the more will you be inclined to modify, to extenuate, or even to withdraw that easy and hasty censure which the "plain" man—the superficial inquirer—passes upon the "broad facts," the brief, unintelligible data, which may be picked up at a cheap rate and with small mental exertion from a newspaper biography or an elementary history. One fears that no amount of research can excuse the withdrawal of the Vienna Note after it had been accepted by Russia, or the non-withdrawal of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our Turcophile ambassador at Constantinople, after it became notorious that he was intriguing for war with Russia instead of negotiating for peace. Yet without doubt the resignation of the peace members of the Cabinet at any period of the negotiations would have precipitated the disaster; and it is clear that they cherished hopes of peace up to the very last,

* Hansard, March 31st, 1854.

† "The Invasion of the Crimea," vol. i., pp. 412-13.

‡ In the Life by Lord Stanmore, chaps. ix., x.

and actually succeeded in postponing hostilities long after the country had become madly bellicose. Of the three Ministers who stood for war (Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, and the Duke of Newcastle), only the last and least prominent was adequately punished. Of the first, the best that can be said is that his policy at this crisis was not more vulgar, more ostentatious, more brutal, or more extravagant than were the sentiments of that well-to-do section of the community upon whose votes he relied, and whose confidence he continued to enjoy until the day of his death.

In November Turkey began the war, and on the 30th of that month her fleet was destroyed at Sinope. About the same time Lord Palmerston, disagreeing with Lord John Russell, who was bent on Parliamentary reform, gave in his resignation, but was persuaded to recall it by the efforts of Mr. Gladstone, who on this question was still an ardent Conservative, and of the Duke of Newcastle, who was as much afraid of peace as Mr. Gladstone of reform. The populace and the press, frenzied by "the treachery" of the Russians and "the massacre" of Sinope, connected the phenomenon with Cabinet dissensions upon foreign policy; and, no doubt, with Palmerston's return, war, from a probability, became a certainty. That Mr. Gladstone did not realise this deplorable result of his action may be put down to his most conspicuous political failing—his want of a sense of proportion. The event might have been foreseen: reform was postponed, but not war: the infinitely less was secured at the cost of the infinitely more.

The War Begun.

March came in like a lion. The hopes of the nation were at last gratified, and its sufferings began. Mr. Gladstone's Budget, based on the honest and unpopular principle that those who indulge in the luxury of a war should not expect posterity to pay for it, must have done something to cool the enthusiasm. At first, however, the extreme of folly and extravagance was avoided. Cobden's opinion that the war—if war there must be—should be purely naval, was for a time respected. The ill-starred and ill-contrived landing in the Crimea did not take place until September. Then it was discovered that a British War Department may be not only the most expensive, but the most corrupt and inefficient in the world; it was also discovered that in the carnival of contractors, food and clothing for the soldiers may easily be mislaid. When the truth began to leak out, counter-charges of parsimony and economy were of course levelled against Mr. Gladstone. These may be contemptuously dismissed, though it is perfectly true that, as steward of the national resources, he would always close his ears as long as possible to the demands of the "military expert."

The session of 1854 was, of course, mainly devoted to the absorbing topic of war; but there was also a little useful legislation. A much-needed Bill to prevent corrupt practices at elections was carried by the united exertions of Mr. Gladstone and Sir Richard Bethell.* The two future antagonists were then on excellent terms, as the following extract will show. It is from a letter of Bethell's to accompany a present of Cephalonian wine: — "Restored to feelings of perfect satisfaction in the British rule, the people

A War Session, 1854.

* Then Solicitor-General; better known as Lord Westbury.

of the islands might be gradually prepared for self-government, for I agree with you that, except Corfu, I should wish the islands to be part of what we shall one day see, an Hellenic kingdom or federal republic." And he promises that, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take a half-serious, half-bantering suggestion, and open up the trade of the islands, an inscription in white marble shall be erected Γλαδστῶνι Εὐεργέτῃ in Corfu, "and that when you visit the islands you shall be received with universal acclaim." * Future events were to add point to this pretty compliment; but it is enough to note that Mr. Gladstone's Philhellenic sympathies were already developed in 1854.

Another question in the settlement of which Bethell co-operated with Mr. Gladstone was that of University reform. To Dr. Jeune, the Master of Pembroke—one of the two clergymen who, in Mr. Gladstone's experience, might have been competent to discharge the functions of Chancellor of the Exchequer—Mr. Gladstone had written in the previous midsummer: "Our fellowships cannot, I think, be safe until they are wholly purged of the character of being sinecures." Jeune, however, still distrusted his member's latent Toryism: "He is still to my mind Pusey in a blue coat." However, the events of 1854 dispelled all doubt as to whether Liberalism had penetrated Mr. Gladstone's academic policy. The report of the University Commission had been published in May, 1852. Mr. Gladstone, with Roundell Palmer and Inglis, had opposed the appointment of the Commission, but he had since recognised his error; and in April, 1854, when the University Bill based upon this report was introduced, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proved to be its most zealous and powerful champion. Stanley, the future Dean, whose work as secretary of the Commission had been highly praised by Mr. Gladstone, was present at the debate on the second reading, and described the "superb" speech "in which, for the first time, all the arguments from our report (without acknowledgment, of course) were worked up in the most effective manner. He vainly endeavoured to reconcile his present with his former position. But with this exception, I listened to his speech with the greatest delight. To see our labours of 1851-2 brought at last to bear on the point, to hear proclaimed on the house-top what we had announced in sheepskins and goatskins, to behold one's old enemies slaughtered before one's face with the most irresistible weapons, was quite intoxicating. One great charm of his speaking is its exceeding good humour. There is great vehemence, but no bitterness."

University Reform, 1854.

The Bill became law on August 7th. Its value, as finally passed, lay not in the semi-representative machinery which it set up for the government of the University, but in the clauses which admitted Dissenters to matriculation and removed some of the more glaring abuses connected with fellowships. Mr. Gladstone laboured incessantly, speaking at every stage of the Bill, removing inconsistencies and smoothing away objections.

In other respects the session of 1854 was not a satisfactory one from Mr. Gladstone's point of view. An attempt to relieve the Colonial Church of its disabilities completely failed. It was one of Mr. Gladstone's last efforts to bring about his long-cherished ideal—a spiritually

* Nash's Life of Lord Westbury, vol. i., p. 142.

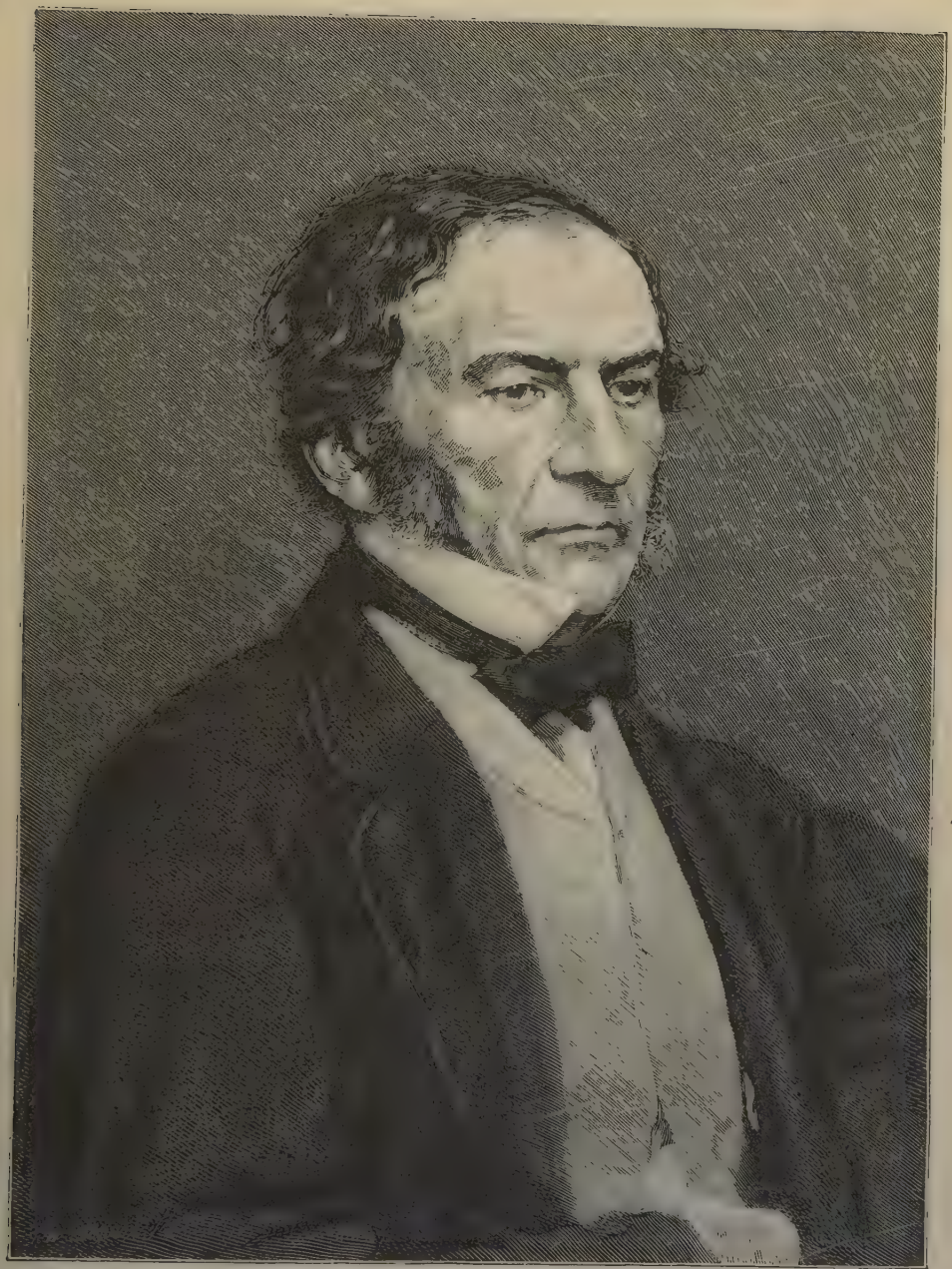


*Photo: Samuel A. Walker.*

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1855.

independent but politically established Church. Also a personal quarrel with Lord John Russell arose out of the dismissal in May of a member of the Civil Service* from a post which he held in the Woods and Forests. The excitement of the war prevented this act from obtaining the same notoriety as the earlier recall of Wilmot.

A Quarrel with Lord John Russell.

The year 1855 is one of the blackest in English history. It began with a series of Ministerial crises. The protraction of the siege of Sebastopol, the miserable condition of our soldiers and the general mismanagement of the war, had brought the grand Coalition Ministry into extreme disrepute. The Cabinet of All the Talents had begun to exhibit "the cold gradations of decay." Roebuck's motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol was brought forward at the end of January in the debate on the Address. Roebuck carried his point against the Government by the extraordinary majority of 305 to 148, and Lord Aberdeen immediately resigned.

A Black Year (1855).

Lord Derby endeavoured to form a Government and applied for the co-operation of Sidney Herbert and Mr. Gladstone. This they were unable to give; though Mr. Gladstone "hoped and believed" he might have "the pleasure of affording his humble assistance to Lord Derby in an independent position." Lord Derby was unsuccessful; and the Queen then sent for Lord Palmerston. Mr. Gladstone was offered and accepted his old position as Chancellor of the Exchequer, thinking that the Government would be able to resist the pressure for a Select Committee. But public opinion was too strong for them; and finding this to be the case, Mr. Gladstone and Sidney Herbert, after only a week or two of office, resigned on the 21st of February, 1855. So sudden a resignation no doubt gravely prejudiced Mr. Gladstone's political future, and gave some colour to the charge that he was too unstable and impracticable for English party politics. "For my part," said Mr. Gladstone, defending his objection to the committee of inquiry, "I believe that mode of proceeding to be worse than useless as regards the army in the Crimea, and I shall ever rejoice, if this motion to-night is to be carried, that my own last words, as a member of the Cabinet of the Earl of Aberdeen, were words of solemn and earnest protest against a proceeding which has no foundation either in the constitution or in the practice of preceding Parliaments, which is useless and mischievous for the purpose which it appears to contemplate, and which, in my judgment, is full of danger to the power, dignity, and usefulness of the Commons of England."

Lord Palmerston's Ministry, 1855.

Mr. Gladstone Resigns.

Two days after his resignation he told the House that its business was not to govern, but to call to account those who governed; that the motion was without precedent, and that in such matters precedent is wisdom; that the Committee was unconstitutional; that it would be nugatory, "and would lead to nothing but confusion and disturbance, increased disaster, shame at home and weakness abroad." Mr. Gladstone recorded his regret at being compelled to leave his department and part from his colleagues and from "the admirable Civil servants with whom I had been

* The Right Hon. P. Kennedy.

associated in the Treasury and Revenue departments." But these pains, he felt, "had to be met and borne."

Mr. Gladstone had not been long out of office when, seeing the growing signs of dissatisfaction in the country at the continuance of the war, with the high prices, the grave loss of life, and the heavy burdens which it involved, he began to urge upon the Government the duty and desirability of negotiating a settlement. At the beginning of July Lord John Russell came back from Vienna and tried to explain the failure of the peace negotiations which had been carried on in the Austrian capital. Northcote on July 7th describes the attempt as "a terrible exposure," and thinks that these disclosures must shake the Government and help the peace party: "It won't do now to single out Gladstone as the advocate of a dishonourable peace, as Lord John acknowledges that both he and Drouyn de Lhuys thought and still think the Austrian terms admissible."

Working for Peace.

The English demand that the Russian fleet in the Black Sea should be limited formed one of the great obstacles to peace. Mr. Gladstone would have wished for an arrangement of this sort; but, though desirable, it was impracticable. "We must all perceive," he said, "that this question of the Black Sea is one of great and, in fact, of insurmountable difficulty. It is not, I think, in the wit of man—at least, I have heard of no suggestion which has proceeded from the wit of man and which furnishes a perfectly satisfactory arrangement with respect to the Black Sea." But this proposal of limitation, on Disraeli's own showing—and Mr. Gladstone was inclined to agree—was one to which Russia never could accede. Although, therefore, he would have rejoiced if Russia's acceptance of limitation had given us peace, it was nevertheless a doctrine which he "scrupled to enforce at the point of the sword."

One member had argued that we must continue fighting for the sake of our "prestige"; another that we must continue for the sake of our Indian possessions. But war should be continued, as it should be begun, for adequate objects. Now it had been a war for "the vindication of European law against unprovoked aggression." But "the very nature of the war showed that it ought to be short. Every war which depends upon alliances ought to be a short war." Therefore, from the 7th of January, 1855, when the Russian plenipotentiary announced that the Emperor of Russia had accepted the four bases of negotiation laid down by the British and French Governments, Mr. Gladstone began to look impatiently for peace. "The proposition I am prepared to maintain," he declared, "is this: that your war was just, that you have gained the objects of your war, and that, if war was just while those objects were unattained, it becomes unjust if you continue to prosecute it after their attainment. I hold that you are now in danger of forfeiting and losing altogether the righteous and elevated character in which you have waged this war."

Mr. Gladstone could not agree with those who urged that negotiation must be postponed until some great victory had been won. What is the sentiment for military success? "It is hideous, it is anti-Christian, it is immoral, it is inhuman; and you have no right to make war simply for what you call success. If, when you have obtained the objects of the war, you continue it in order to obtain military glory—observe the broad distinction which

A Denunciation of Military Glory.

exists between the objects of the war and success in your military operations—if you persist in the war for the sake of mere military glory, I say you tempt the justice of Him in Whose hands the fates of armies are as absolutely lodged as the fate of the infant slumbering in its cradle." He had not winced under the charge made by Bright of shedding blood in an unnecessary war. "But when I see that Russia has conceded the substance of what was asked, . . when I see the scales of justice so tremulously balanced, as though they were even verged towards placing those in the wrong who had been in the right, and perhaps likewise those in the right who had been grossly in the wrong, I feel deeply the responsibility which I should incur if I did not beseech the House to pause in the course which is open before them. We have seen with our own eyes, but a few days ago, and with the deepest interest, some of the fainter traces of the desolation of war written upon the forms of those heroic men who received from the hands of Majesty itself not the reward, indeed, but yet the acknowledgment of their glorious deeds. We rejoice to see that many of those noble forms are again erect, and that they have gained the elastic step of health and youth. But what shall we say of the thousands of our countrymen who sleep beside the waters of the Bosphorus and under the rocks of Balaclava?" *

It would be impossible and tedious to record the many protests which Mr. Gladstone entered against the prolongation of a war "which costs the allies in money not less than £100,000,000 per annum, together with a loss of lives which will, I think, not be very greatly overstated at a thousand a day for all parties to the war taken together." He continued to defend the war so far as its original objects were concerned. "The war into which I reluctantly but deliberately agreed to enter was a war the objects of which I can define; they are to be found in the Four Points. † . . . Those objects have been, in our judgment attained," and that being so, "is it inconsistency in us, with our views, to say that the war ought to be brought to a close? Would it not, on the contrary, have been the most contemptible effeminacy of character if a man in my position, who feels that he has been instrumental in bringing his country into this struggle, were to hesitate a single moment when he was firmly and fully convinced in his own mind that the time had arrived when she might with honour pass from it?" ‡ Mr. Gladstone denied that in urging these views

**The Objects of the War Defended.**

* Hansard, May 24th, 1855.

† The "four points"—especially the fourth—have a melancholy and antiquarian interest:—1. Russian Protectorate over the Principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Servia to cease; the privileges granted by the Sultan to these provinces to be placed under a collective guarantee of the Powers. 2. Navigation of the Danube at its mouth to be freed from all obstacles, and submitted to the application of the principles established by the Congress of Vienna. 3. The Treaty of the 13th of July, 1841, to be revised so as to put an end to the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. 4. Russia to give up her claim to an official protectorate over the subjects of the Sublime Porte, to whatever rite they may belong; and France, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia to assist mutually in obtaining from the Ottoman Government the confirmation and the observance of the religious privileges of the different Christian communities, and to turn to account, in the common interests of their co-religionists, the generous intentions manifested by the Sultan, at the same time avoiding any aggression on his dignity and the independence of his crown.

‡ Hansard, August 3rd, 1855.

he was guilty of conspiracy or combination with the Peace party, for whose consistency and principles he had the greatest respect, but from whom he differed as to the original justice and necessity of the war. But he deprecated the bellicose attitude of those who "look to effecting progress by means of the sword," and of those others who, "without proceeding to such lengths, have vague and, as I think, somewhat visionary views of humbling our enemy."

One curious result of Mr. Gladstone's hatred of the war was that it prevented him from appreciating a famous poem. When "In Memoriam" appeared, Mr. Gladstone had written a review which Tennyson "thought one of the ablest," * and had taken the occasion of paying another tribute to Arthur Hallam, in whose "young fading image," a poet "fast rising towards the lofty summits of his art" found "the richest source of his imagination, and of thoughts that gave him buoyancy for a flight such as he had not hitherto attained." But "Maud," which was published in 1855, spoke of "a hope for the world in the coming wars," and Mr. Gladstone's indignation was increased when he read that—

A Criticism of "Maud."

> "The long, long canker of peace is over and done;
> And now, by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
> And dreadful grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
> The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire."

"It may be good frenzy," says the critic, "but we doubt its being good poetry." It was so uncalled for. "We do not recollect that 1855 was a season of serious danger from a mania for peace and its pursuits." One passage is eminently characteristic of Mr. Gladstone's strength and weakness. "Maud" might have been one of Roebuck's or Palmerston's speeches:—

"But what is a little strange is, that war should be recommended as a specific for the particular evil of Mammon-worship. Such it never was, even in the days when the Greek heroes longed for the booty of Troy, and anticipated lying by the wives of its princes and its citizens.

"Still it had, in times now gone by, ennobling elements and tendencies of the less sordid kind. But one inevitable characteristic of modern war is, that it is associated throughout, in all its particulars, with a vast and most irregular formation of commercial enterprise. There is no incentive to Mammon-worship so remarkable as that which it affords. The political economy of war is now one of its most commanding aspects. Every farthing, with the smallest exceptions conceivable, of the scores or hundreds of millions which a war may cost, goes directly, and very violently, to stimulate production, though it is intended ultimately for waste or for destruction. Even apart from the fact that war suspends, *ipso facto*, every rule of public thrift, and tends to sap honesty itself in the use of the public treasure for which it makes such unbounded calls, it therefore is the greatest feeder of that lust of gold which we are told is the essence of commerce, though we had hoped it was only its occasional besetting sin. It is, however, more than this; for the regular commerce of peace is tameness itself compared with the gambling spirit which war, through the rapid shiftings and high prices which it brings, always introduces into trade. In its moral operations it more resembles, perhaps, the finding of a new gold-field than anything else. Meantime, as the most wicked mothers do not kill their offspring from a taste for the practice in the abstract, but under the pressure of want, and as war always brings home want to a larger circle of the people

* Tennyson's Life, by Hallam, Lord Tennyson, vol. i., p. 299. *Cf.* "Gleanings," vol. ii pp. 136–7.

than feel it in peace, we ask the hero of 'Maud' to let us know whether war is more likely to reduce or to multiply the horrors which he denounces? Will more babies be poisoned amidst comparative ease and plenty, or when, as before the fall of Napoleon, provisions were twice as dear as they now are, and wages not much more than half as high?" *

The predominance of religious and moral over æsthetic considerations was one of the characteristics of Mr. Gladstone's intellect; and there are several touches in this beautiful and vehement poem which would naturally offend his susceptibilities and arouse his antagonism.

"It is notable," writes the present Lord Tennyson, "that two such appreciative critics as Mr. Gladstone and Dr. Van Dyke wholly misapprehended the meaning of 'Maud' until they heard my father read it, and that they both then publicly recanted their first criticisms. 'No one but a noble-minded man would have done that,' my father used to say of Mr. Gladstone." †

Mr. Gladstone's recantation is dated 1878; and a personal interest attaches to his explanation of the error:—

"I can now see, and I at once confess, that a feeling which had reference to the growth of the war spirit in the outer world at the date of this article dislocated my frame of mind, and disabled me from dealing even tolerably with the work as a work of imagination. . . . . Even as regards the passages devoted to war frenzy, equity should have reminded me of the fine lines in the *latter* portion of x. 3 (Part I.), and of the emphatic words v. 10 (Part II.):—

"I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin."

**Mr. Gladstone's Position in 1855.**

The relation in which Mr. Gladstone stood to English parties—if the personal cliques of a wretched era deserve so dignified an appellation—during this and the three succeeding years is puzzling in the extreme. In politics nothing is less successful than uncertainty. Your true partisan cannot tolerate the combination of Conservative sympathies with Liberal opinions. Thus at the beginning of 1855, when Lord Derby, after his futile attempt to form a Ministry, convened a Conservative meeting, he was received with hisses and howls and cries of "No Puseyites, no Papists," and was finally forced to apologise for having asked for Mr. Gladstone's assistance. Even among the Oxford Tractarians the popularity of the member for the University was waning. Keble had begun to substitute "Mr. Gladstone" for the familiar "W. E. G." of his letters. This came of the speeches on University Reform. In the spring and summer of 1855 Mr. Gladstone's tendency was thought to be Conservative. A conversation between Frederick Elliot and Nassau Senior at this time shows that it was considered quite on the cards that he would cross the floor of the House and oust Disraeli from the leadership. Failing that, Senior thought that he might join the Radicals. Elliot's objection makes good reading now:—

"He may try it, but he will fail. They will not accept him. He is purely a rhetorician, and a rhetorician powerful only in attack. He wants knowledge, he wants

* On Tennyson, the *Quarterly Review*, 1859. "Gleanings," vol. ii., pp. 144–145.
† Life of Tennyson, vol. i., p. 399.

the habits of patient investigation by which it is to be acquired, he wants sincerity, he wants public spirit, he wants tact, he wants birth, he wants fortune—he wants, in short, nine out of ten of the qualities that fit a man to lead a party"!

In all Mr. Gladstone's uncertainty he had an unfailing friend and adviser in Lord Aberdeen, whose resignation had caused him the keenest suffering. In a letter written at the time he had consoled himself and his chief by the reflection that "those who have long acted with you were called by a sense of public duty to gather themselves round you at the last, and to aid whatever their faithful and declared adherence could add to the dignity and lustre of your conduct." Mr. Gladstone added: "You make far too much of any service I have rendered to your Government. I wish it were in my power to do justice, in return, to the benefits I have received from you. Your whole demeanour has been a living lesson to me; and I have never gone, with my vulnerable temper and impetuous moods, into your presence without feeling the strong influence of your calm and settled spirit." His Relations with Lord Aberdeen.

Lord Aberdeen realised his colleague's transcendent genius. "Gladstone," he is reported to have said in the autumn of this year, "must thoroughly recover his popularity. This unpopularity is merely temporary. He is supreme in the House of Commons. The Queen has quite got over her feeling against him, and likes him much."

It has been seen that Mr. Gladstone's first approximation to a Liberal system of thought dates from his administrative work at the Board of Trade; and in these years of fluctuation and comparative reaction his hold upon the great principles of public economy and departmental efficiency was never relaxed. If the personal influence of Lord Aberdeen counted for something in preventing a relapse into the Conservative ranks, his sympathy with the Manchester school upon the subjects of peace, retrenchment, and financial reform went for still more. To take but one instance. On the 10th July, 1855, a debate arose on the question of extending administrative reform to the consular and diplomatic services, and several very interesting points were raised. Sir Stafford Northcote, whose name is honourably connected with the reform of the Civil Service, pointed out the corruption and abuses involved in appointment by patronage, and asked very pertinently whether the Duke of Newcastle was to be blamed for the failures which took place in his department at the outset of the war. Was it not the fact that these failures arose to a very great extent from the administrative machinery with which he had to work? It seemed to him as though his Grace was very much in the position of our sappers and miners, whose tools broke in executing the works before Sebastopol. Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who had succeeded Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer, made a learned and pedantic speech, in which he argued that as the Greeks, Romans, Venetians, Spaniards, French, and Americans had not employed the system of open competition by examination for Government appointments, therefore England ought not to do so. There is usually a deliciously piquant flavour about Mr. Gladstone's replies to Lewis, and on this occasion he was in a particularly happy mood:— Civil Service Reform, 1855.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer quotes the examples of other nations and refers us to the Romans and the Americans. I admit that the Romans were great masters of civil wisdom; but really, to say that because the Romans did not adopt particular institutions, they are not suited to the meridian of the present age, would be to admit a doctrine which would lead not only to the non-introduction of many improvements, but also to the removal of many of those institutions which we most dearly cherish, to the total extirpation of our existing form of government. The right hon. baronet will not find a prototype of the House of Commons among the Roman institutions; and, to make an appeal which will go more directly to the heart of the right hon. baronet, I will remind him that he will find nothing among the Roman institutions that bears the slightest resemblance to our National Debt. Neither, with all his erudition—of which no man possesses more—can he extract anything from the history of the Romans at all parallel to that loan which he has so successfully raised during the present year.* With regard to America,† I am not disposed to speak lightly of American institutions; they are marvellous creations of human wisdom, but creations which have been brought into existence under many disadvantages which we are free from, and perhaps under some advantages which we do not possess. But I cannot therefore admit that in matters of government we ought to cross the Atlantic for a pattern; and, least of all, as regards patronage and admission to office, shall I seek for our pattern in America. The right hon. baronet has pointed to joint stock companies and to private institutions which do not admit persons by competition in the sense in which the word is proposed to be used. They certainly do not admit this system, because the principle of private interest which presides over the management of these institutions is a self-acting security, and as perfect a guarantee as human infirmity will admit of, that the best men will be chosen for the best places as they fall vacant. You are enabled in private institutions to dispense with that machinery which the nature of public establishments obliges you to call to your aid. In the public service you cannot count upon that uniform vigour and vivacity which the nature of private institutions permits; and you have therefore to choose the best possible substitute."

**A Reply to Cornewall Lewis.**

Such a substitute was to be sought in a system of open examination, not in a system of patronage tempered by heredity. But, unhappily for the conduct of our foreign policy, Palmerston and Lewis succeeded in getting a majority of fifteen in a thin House: and the work of the Civil Service reformers, though extended in other directions, has never been completed. Diplomacy remains "a last choice preserve for administration practised as a sport."

But Mr. Gladstone's enthusiasm for political reforms did not extend to popular education. In the session of 1856 he met Lord John Russell's "resolutions," which aimed at establishing a system of national education, by a speech almost incredibly reactionary in its tone. To the need for improvement he opposed the dangers of a system that would "degenerate into hard irreligion." He strongly deprecated the erection of a central authority, the establishment of compulsory rates, the creation of Government inspectors—anything, in fact, which might be likely to promote knowledge and intelligence at the expense of elasticity, voluntaryism, and "Christian philanthropy."

**National Education, 1856.**

* Lewis had abandoned Mr. Gladstone's heroic attempt to pay for the war out of current revenue; and the Government was at this moment joining France in the guarantee of a Turkish loan, which Gladstone, combining with Disraeli, strenuously opposed in the following month.

† The reference was to the popularity of the spoils system in America, and the dislike of that great nation for appointment or retention of appointment on the ground of merit.

Few men are political heroes to their political associates: consequently the gloomy predictions about his future which are revealed in the private letters of Mr. Gladstone's friends at this period must be discounted. "No man can make head against such general aversion," said one. Another regretted that "with all his eloquence" he had no personal following and could not influence the House. Another looked upon him "as lost—as a splendid example of what might have been." On the other hand, Dallas, then American Minister in London, wrote to his Secretary of State at a time (April 7th, 1856) when Lord Palmerston, having patched up an unpopular peace with Russia,* was engaged in an equally unpopular quarrel with the United States:—

"A vague impression prevails that upon these two questions united [the Treaty of Peace and relations with America] the Ministry will go by the board, and that Mr. Gladstone, certainly the only fully competent man presenting himself, will in the new combination take the place now filled by Lord Palmerston."

Mr. Gladstone's classical description of himself and his brother Peelites as "roving icebergs," inhospitable and dangerous, with which it was easy to collide and difficult to associate, gives an accurate impression of the political situation. "I believe," he said, in a debate of this period, "that the day for this country will be a happy day when party combinations shall be restored." In truth, Palmerston's almost despotic power would hardly have been possible but for this disorganisation and the consequent impotency of the House of Commons.

**"Roving Icebergs."**

Altogether it would seem that Mr. Gladstone was beginning to feel depressed and pessimistic. Northcote, alarmed at his own political isolation—he seems to have been constantly consulting his political friends as to what his political complexion might be about to be—applied for advice to Mr. Gladstone, who replied in a letter of October 9th: "As a delicate and scrupulous conscience has led you to seek for aid, I sincerely wish that I could render it in full. I will cheerfully do the little I can; but it is very little." Northcote was an excellent lieutenant, but he wanted leading. And that is exactly what Mr. Gladstone failed to give him. Disraeli understood his character better, saw his weakness, appreciated his value, and eventually won him over in spite of the extraordinary incompatibility of their sentiments and temperaments. In truth, at this time Mr. Gladstone's uncertainty was almost as great as that of his questioner. He thought that the condition of public affairs was "anomalous and disjointed," but hoped that independent men might preserve "the old stable elements of the House of Commons." The possibility of a coalition between himself and Disraeli was much discussed at the time and must have crossed his mind. Northcote mentions it on January 30th, 1857, and adds that Mr. Gladstone is "very angry with Lord Palmerston, and says his principal political object now is to turn out the Government. We are pretty sure to have some fun before long."

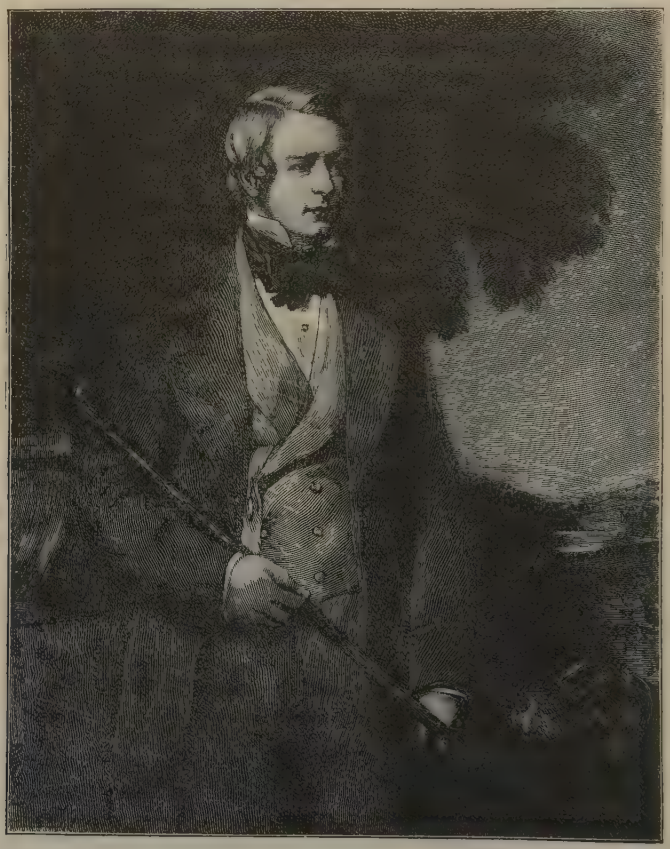
**Stafford Northcote seeking a Leader.**

The "fun" was not long delayed; but Mr. Gladstone was disappointed in his hope of beating the Government on the Budget.

* Sebastopol had fallen on September 8th, 1855. The Treaty of Peace was signed at Paris on the 30th of the following March.

The political crisis which now arose depended upon events that had been taking place in the Far East. In the previous October the lorcha *Arrow*, a Chinese vessel, trading falsely under the British flag, was boarded at Canton by the Chinese authorities, who took the crew into custody on a charge of piracy and hauled down the flag. Sir John Bowring, the British plenipotentiary at Hong-Kong, demanded an apology and

**The Case of the Lorcha "Arrow."**



SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE ABOUT 1857.

(*From the Painting by J. P. Knight, R.A., at Pynes, Devonshire.*)

the restoration of the crew within forty-eight hours. The men were returned, but no apology was forthcoming. Sir John, who had been looking for a pretext to give British merchants access to Canton, took advantage, as he put it, of "the development of events," and without awaiting instructions from home, ordered the British admiral to commence hostilities. A fleet of war-junks was sunk; Canton shelled and captured. At the end of February, 1857, when these

iniquitous proceedings became known in England, votes of condemnation on the policy of the Government were moved concurrently in the Lords and the Commons by Lord Derby and by Cobden. The debate in the Commons was conducted very bitterly, and it soon became probable that the Peace party would be reinforced by the whole strength of the Tory and Peelite factions. Greville's comments are lively and contradictory. On February 27th he expected that the Government would have a majority, thanks to a rally that had taken place among the Liberals, and to "the aversion of the stiff Tories to the union between Gladstone and their leaders, the approaching consummation of which seems not to be denied." Disraeli was discredited and unpopular at the time: and it seems that the Conservatives, disgusted, were again turning their eyes towards Gladstone—the very man whom but two years before they had so peremptorily excluded. On the 2nd of March Greville writes: "Derby has announced to his assembled party that he is ready to join with Gladstone." Mr. Gladstone's speech on China was "magnificent"; and we can easily believe the tradition that his final summary and appeal won over a number of waverers:—

"With you, then, with us, with every one of us, it rests to show that this House, which is the first, the most ancient, and the noblest temple of freedom in the world, is also the temple of that everlasting justice without which freedom itself would only be a name, or only a curse to mankind. And I cherish the trust and belief that when you, Sir, rise to declare in your place to-night the numbers of the division from the chair which you adorn, the words which you speak will go forth from the walls of the House of Commons not only as a message of mercy and peace, but also as a message of British justice and British wisdom, to the farthest corners of the world."

An Appeal to British Justice.

Palmerston complained bitterly that there was a conspiracy against him; but his speech was unavailing, and he was beaten by sixteen votes. It was a fatal triumph for the cause of justice. Palmerston appealed to the country in the confident and only too well-founded anticipation that the country would endorse the *Civis Romanus sum* argument just as enthusiastically when the citizen happened to be a Chinese pirate as Parliament had done when he chanced to be a Maltese Jew.* In the second case a trifling excess of infamy was more than counterbalanced by the interests of British commerce. Cobdenites and Peelites alike were almost extinguished. Bright was beaten at Manchester, Cobden at Huddersfield, Cardwell at Oxford. Milner-Gibson and many of the lesser men who had voted against the Government on the China question lost their seats. Oxford University, however, whether because it had taken to heart Northcote's pamphlet, or because it thought the overthrow of the Whig Government a sign of grace, or perhaps merely for the sake of identifying itself once more with a losing and unpopular cause, returned Mr. Gladstone unopposed. But this did not save him from a personal humiliation. The absence of anxiety about his seat at Oxford had induced him to undertake an electioneering

Palmerston defeated in Parliament, 1857.

But Victorious in the Country.

* The cause of the war was neatly parodied by Whiteside in one of the debates of 1864: "The noble Viscount [Palmerston] saw a British flag, which was seen by no one else, floating upon the lorcha *Arrow*, and went to war with China."

campaign in Flintshire on behalf of his brother-in-law, Sir Stephen Glynne, "the Tory and Tractarian candidate." Itinerating from place to place, Mr. Gladstone "filled every hamlet with his eloquence." The aristocratic Whigs and many sticklers for political propriety were furious at this flagrant instance of demagogism. An ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer stumping the country! Here was a new terror added to British politics. "Welsh mobs," shrieked one of the more violent critics, "were treated to set speeches which would have moved Westminster!" What would happen to young gentlemen of wealth and family if votes were to be acquired in county as well as urban constituencies by political reasoning? At these "vulgar" election meetings Mr. Gladstone had made violent attacks upon Lord Palmerston's administration for its financial extravagance, and had "dealt out in public streets and public buildings to such mob audiences as he could collect the great things he would do if he were again in power," heaping upon Lord Palmerston "an amount of abuse which even Mr. Ernest Jones or any other Chartist leader would have been reluctant to utter." *

A First "Pilgrimage of Passion," 1857.

Mr. Gladstone's efforts were altogether fruitless. His brother-in-law was decisively beaten by a Government candidate. This humiliation, and the general victory of Palmerston, seems to have thoroughly disconcerted him. For two months after the opening of the session the Peelite leader "sulked in his tent," made no speeches, scarcely ever entered the doors of St. Stephen's. Everything seemed to prosper with Palmerston; his opponents appeared to acquiesce in his peaceful and undisturbed reign; and hardly a division was challenged. But a little contemptuous pity was bestowed upon the leaders of the beaten armies; and among them Mr. Gladstone had his share of the attention of the Press. It was pointed out that his attempt to play the part of a rhetorical Joseph Hume and to save the nation from Palmerston's "guilty extravagance" had completely failed. A contrast was drawn between his present silence and the factious frequency of his speeches against the Government on the Budget and the China question. If Palmerston's majority had been small, how he would have thundered against the extravagance of the Army and Navy Estimates! But the times were changed; and the *Examiner* congratulated its readers on the "sobered pretensions of the Peelite party."

But in July the Divorce Bill of Sir Richard Bethell, the Attorney-General, brought Mr. Gladstone back to the House of Commons. Hitherto dissolution of marriage could only be effected by a special Act of Parliament. Divorce was the luxury of the rich. On the recommendation of a Commission which reported in 1853, a Bill had been brought in by Lord Aberdeen's Government for the purpose of putting the remedy within the reach of the poor. The Bill had been dropped, and it was now revived in an improved form. But in the meantime Mr. Gladstone had been studying the question, and in 1857 he was prepared to resist, by every method which the resources of Parliament suggested, legislation very similar to that which had been introduced three years earlier. He opposed judicial divorce as a retrograde step tending to bring us back "towards a state of laxity which

Bethell's Divorce Bill, 1857.

* See letter to the *Times*, by W., April 9th, 1857.

Christianity does not recognise," as opposed to the wishes of the country, as dangerous to society, and as an insult to religion. Mr. Gladstone's objections continued unabated to the end of his life, though he recognised that in opposing it he had been opposing an almost universal sentiment. Nothing could be finer or juster than his noble protest against the inequality of the Bill—against the doctrine that you should arm the man with the right of divorce, but not the woman; that you should give the remedy of divorce to women in those cases only where the husband's adultery is combined with cruelty, thereby destroying "the firm, the broad, the indestructible basis of the equality of the sexes under the Christian law."

The Bill was fought with tremendous vigour "clause by clause, line by line, at times almost word by word." The debates were ample and comprehensive in their general character. One member challenged the House to produce a single passage in the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, which countenanced the dissolubility of the marriage tie. Mr. Gladstone roamed with perfect ease and freedom in the course of eighty speeches from the Flood to the Council of Trent, and from the Council of Trent to the Royal Commission of 1853. Time after time the duel between Bethell and Gladstone was renewed. With almost superhuman subtlety they joined issue upon disputed passages in the Greek Testament,* Mr. Gladstone supporting his views by reference to the Complutensian edition, Griesbach, Lachmann, Lucas Brugensis, Selden, and Dr. Burton. They gave rival sketches of the history of the theory of marriage in the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, discussed the practice of the ecclesiastical courts, and cited the favourable views of eminent lawyers and divines from the time of Moses downwards. They accused one another of being over subtle and disputatious, too fond of casuistry, too minute in their appeals to antiquity and tradition.

Bethell and Gladstone.

On the whole, however—though he was nearly worn out by the physical strain—Bethell must be adjudged the victor. He complained afterwards that "Gladstone's violence gave a vehement personal character to the debates." But the element was introduced at an early stage by Bethell himself:—

"My right hon. friend the member for the University of Oxford, who, like Aaron's rod, swallows up all the rest of my opponents, has transcended himself on this occasion. My right hon. friend has come down to the House impressed with the high religious duty of opposing the Bill, on the grounds that it is anti-Scriptural, pregnant with the most imminent danger to the highest moral interests of the community, and an instrument which would rend the Church of England in twain. And yet, notwithstanding, the right hon. gentleman must vote for the Bill, or he must not vote at all. None that respects the right hon. gentleman can permit him to vote in accordance with his speech. Had the right hon. gentleman no scruples in 1854 as to the injury likely to accrue to the morals of the community, and was he indifferent to the interests of the Church of England in that year? Was not the duty of a Cabinet Minister plainly this: to be no party to any measure that was opposed to religious obligations, the duties of morality, or the interests of the Church of England? And yet this very Bill now before the House was a measure of the Cabinet of 1854, of which my right hon. friend was a distinguished member. Surely my right hon. friend

*It is a curious fact that Mr. Gladstone supported the reading of the Revised, Bethell that of the Authorised, Version of Matthew xix. 9.

cannot have it said that he is such a creature of impulse that the opinions, sentiments, and principles of conduct adopted by him in 1854 are forgotten in 1857." *

The Divorce Bill had not yet passed its final stages when a debate which arose on the question of the purchase of shares in a Euphrates railway elicited from Mr. Gladstone an interesting expression of his views upon Eastern policy. He argued against the investment, on the ground that if the Government took any part in the construction of a line through the Turkish Empire they would be responsible for the [mis]management of the line and the [mis]government of the country through which it passed. Besides, if we intermeddled either in that project or in the rival project of the Suez Canal, there would be complications with France and danger to that concert or concord of Europe "which is of paramount importance in regard to our Eastern policy." To maintain this concord should be a rule of our Eastern policy. Another rule, "perhaps the most essential of all, is not to give a handle to other nations for alleging that we are setting an example of interference with their Government and domestic affairs." On the other hand, we must not look with jealousy upon such a scheme as that of the Suez Canal; for "no man could look at the map of the globe and deny that a canal through the Isthmus of Suez, if practicable, would be a great stroke for the benefit of mankind;" that being so, "let us not create in Europe an opinion that the possession of India by Great Britain is something to be upheld by opposition to measures that are beneficial to the general interests of Europe; let us not create that fatal antithesis and contradiction, because it would do more to weaken our hold upon Hindostan than ten such mutinies as that which has just occurred."

Rules of Eastern Policy, 1857.

Mr. Gladstone had now laid down three rules of Eastern policy :—

1. Preserve European concord or concert.

2. Do not intermeddle in the domestic government of the Ottoman Empire.

3. Do not make the safety of India a pretext for resisting measures of general benefit.

But to these three a fourth must be added, "of not less importance." It was "that where England has an influence to exercise on the affairs of the East, she should not repose her entire, or even her principal, confidence on armed intervention to prevent the aggressions of Russia on Turkey, but should endeavour to raise up such living barriers as might effectually interpose between Constantinople and the Russian Empire."

Here we get a clear proof that Mr. Gladstone was turning his back on the old plan of defending Turkey in which he had reluctantly acquiesced four years previously. He was much disturbed by the delay which had occurred in the settlement of the Danubian Principalities. The political freedom which they had vindicated "amid surrounding slavery" was still imperfect. But it was there if anywhere that "we might hope to see Christian institutions and Christian liberty setting an example" to adjoining but even less favoured regions.†

* Mr. Gladstone's sole reply to the charge of inconsistency seems to have been: "It is only during the present year that I have found leisure to inquire into this subject."

† Hansard, August 14th, 1857.

At this time (1857) the horrors of the Indian Mutiny were at their height. The first outbreak had occurred in March. The massacre of Cawnpore took place in June. The public attention was almost wholly absorbed in the Mutiny; and it was natural that Mr. Gladstone, as principal speaker at the annual meeting of the Society for the Aid of Foreign Missions, should have devoted himself to the "lesson of humility" taught by this great administrative failure. The spread of Christianity could only, he said, be brought about by voluntary efforts; but "if we cannot propagate Christianity as a State, why should we not propagate it as a Church and as a people?"

The new year brought about a change of Ministry. On the 14th of January occurred Orsini's desperate attempt to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon. Some of the conspirators were suspected of escaping to England, and much bad feeling arose between the two nations. Palmerston, who had already lost office once through the haste and effusiveness of his friendship for Napoleon, now fell a victim to the jingoism he had himself done so much to create. His Conspiracy to Murder Bill, which was designed to rescue England from the reproach of being an asylum for assassins, involved him in great unpopularity.

Palmerston defeated, 1858.

The Government was defeated on February 19th by 234 votes to 215, an amendment proposed by Milner-Gibson being supported by Conservatives, Radicals, and four Peelites—Gladstone, Graham, Cardwell, and Sidney Herbert. Viscount Palmerston resigned, and the Earl of Derby succeeded in forming a weak Ministry in which Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. Politics were becoming more and more impossible. Genuine Liberals were tired of Palmerstonian arts. Lady Palmerston was doing her best to secure the much-needed co-operation of Lord John Russell, by telling the Duke of Bedford that her husband had "a great affection for John." The Liberal and Whig party was torn by factions. Mr. Gladstone was drawing closer to Lord John Russell * and Sir James Graham; but he had just shown his antipathy for Palmerston and the Palmerstonian foreign policy in the *Quarterly Review*.

And succeeded by Lord Derby.

Perhaps it was the asperity of this last article which induced Lord Derby to renew the negotiations with Mr. Gladstone. In the previous year a meeting had been all but arranged; and it is generally supposed that only Lord Aberdeen's advice had dissuaded Mr. Gladstone from an alliance with the Conservative party. On the present occasion also the negotiations seemed to promise success. Mr. Gladstone and Sir James Graham (whose Whiggism had suddenly begun to evaporate) had deliberately protected the Tory Government from a formidable attack of Lord John Russell. Both Gladstone and Graham were sitting on the Ministerial benches and defending Ministerial measures. Both, according to the *Times*, had gone back to their Toryism. On the other hand, Sidney Herbert and Cardwell seemed to be about to join the Liberal party. It looked as if the Peelites were at last about to split. However, on May 29th the Press announced that the negotiations had terminated

* During Palmerston's Ministry, Lord John Russell, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Robert Cecil were sitting together on the Opposition benches.

"for the present," though there was "no solid difficulty in the way of a junction on the part of Mr. Gladstone with the present Government." A natural reluctance to leave his old connections was said to have formed "the main obstacle to that acceptance of high office by Mr. Gladstone which has been hoped for during several days past." But no doubt a greater obstacle was Mr. Gladstone's reluctance to subordinate himself to Disraeli, who was, of course, anxious enough to bring about so desirable a humiliation.*

VISCOUNT CARDWELL.

(*After the Drawing by George Richmond, R.A.*)

**The Government's Indian Policy, 1858.**

Mr. Gladstone gave valuable assistance to the Government by supporting their Indian policy; and to his exertions was largely due the collapse of the Opposition on May 21st, 1858, when Cardwell withdrew a resolution of censure. Disraeli made the most of his victory in his famous speech at the Slough banquet:—

"We were all assembled, our benches with their serried ranks seemed to rival those

* Four years later Disraeli wrote to Bishop Wilberforce: "I wish you could have induced Gladstone to have joined Lord Derby's Government when Lord Ellenborough resigned in 1858. It was not my fault that he did not: I almost went on my knees to him."

of our proud opponents, when suddenly there arose a wail of distress, but not from us. I can only liken the scene to the mutiny of the Bengal army. Regiment after regiment, corps after corps, general after general, all acknowledged that they could not march through Coventry with her Majesty's Opposition. It was like a convulsion of nature rather than any ordinary transaction of human life. I was reminded by it of one of those earthquakes which take place in Calabria or Peru. There was a rumbling

SIR JAMES GRAHAM.

(*From the Lithograph by E. Desmaisons.*)

murmur—a groan—a shriek—a sound of distant thunder. No one knew whether it came from the top or bottom of the House. There was a rent, a fissure in the ground, and then a village disappeared, then a tall tower toppled down, and the whole of the Opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy."

The Slough speech may have taught Mr. Gladstone that generous but independent assistance, however much it may be appreciated, is not apt to be acknowledged. At any rate, from this time his enthusiasm for the Tory Government becomes somewhat less marked.

Indeed, on the economic side, Mr. Gladstone's opinions had continued to advance with an almost startling rapidity. Some idea of his progress may be gained by glancing at an interesting speech on the Metropolis Local Management Act Amendment Bill, in which he urged that the ground landlords, as having the permanent interest in improvements, should be made to bear a fair proportion of the charge. Under this Bill, which was introduced in July, 1858, a large sum was to be raised for the purpose of purifying the Thames; and it was to be spent by the Metropolitan Board of Works, a body which, if it could be called a popular body at all, was a body "so watered, filtered, and strained through so many media that he was afraid they had lost all that was valuable in those principles in the complicated process they had established." It is a remarkable fact that in the year 1858 Mr. Gladstone should have asserted two principles in metropolitan representation and taxation—principles which only began to win their way to general recognition in the last years of his life. Firstly, that the central body which spent the money of the ratepayers on general purposes should be a body not co-opted by the vestries, but popularly elected, so that the responsibility of the body to the ratepayers might be "direct and stringent." Secondly, that a fair share of the taxation should be raised from ground rents. That the legal difficulties would be considerable he freely admitted. But such an objection would not excuse them from "endeavouring to throw the burdens on the right parties." But it must not be supposed that so revolutionary a doctrine excited any great interest at the time. The notion that a landlord should help to pay for improvements to his property was felt to be too absurd to require serious criticism.

Mr. Gladstone's Economic Progress.

In other respects Mr. Gladstone's activity during the session of 1858 was not very great. He voted for a resolution, moved by Roebuck, that England ought not to use her influence with the Sultan in order to induce him to withhold his assent from the Suez Canal scheme. He also himself moved a resolution, which was supported by Roebuck, in favour of the unification and strengthening of the two Danubian Principalities.* In this debate Mr. Gladstone resented a sneer of Disraeli's at "the rhetorician of the day," but Disraeli denied the reference.

But among all the oppressed nations of the East, the Greeks, who combined aspirations for liberty and autonomy with a traditional culture and a traditional Church, claimed the largest share of Mr. Gladstone's sympathy. The Ionian Islands were at this time under the general protection of the Powers and the special administration of England. The people were not content. Joined by the ties of blood and language to the little Greek kingdom on the mainland, they wished to be united by the more definite articles of political association. In these aspirations they had no more genuine sympathisers than Bulwer Lytton, then Secretary for the Colonies, and Mr. Gladstone. The Government was in a very precarious position; and Disraeli probably felt that Mr. Gladstone's absence would be more conducive to his own security than Mr. Gladstone's "independent

The Mission to the Ionian Islands, 1858.

* Their services did not pass unrecognised. One of the first acts of the new kingdom of Roumania was to confer citizenship upon Gladstone and Roebuck.

support" — a combination in which the adjective was apt to possess more force than the substantive. At any rate, when Lytton hit on the idea of sending a High Commissioner Extraordinary to examine into the condition and ascertain the wishes of the Ionian Islanders, he had little difficulty in persuading Lord Derby to offer the position to Mr. Gladstone. This Mr. Gladstone was delighted to accept. A born administrator, he found the comparative inactivity of opposition positively irksome. Accordingly, after paying, with Mrs. Gladstone, a visit to Lord Aberdeen at Haddo, writing some translations of Horace, and discussing middle-class examinations at Oxford, he set himself to work early in November to make the preliminary arrangements for his mission. Frederic Rogers, afterwards Lord Blachford, was then at the Colonial Office. On November 8th, 1858, he wrote to his sister, Miss Rogers:—

"I have been so busy that I forgot whether I told you about Gladstone's mission, not that I have much to say, except that I have come across him and Sir Edward [Bulwer Lytton] a little from having to draw up this commission. It was very absurd to see them talking it over. Gladstone's clear, dark eyes and serious face and ponderous forehead and calm manner was such a contrast with Sir E.'s lean, narrow face and hurried, theatrical, conscious kind of ways."

On the following day Rogers amplified his description, adding a few bureaucratic touches which show that his own sympathies were not with the Greeks:—

"He (Gladstone) and Sir Edward Lytton are obviously Philhellenes, and, I should say, disposed to think that we have treated the Ionians rather arbitrarily. This I take to be true; but on the other hand, I imagine that it is difficult to treat such a pack of scamps otherwise."

The Ionians, he went on to say, used the liberty given them "to job astoundingly and rebel occasionally. We, on the other hand, have shot the rebels and resumed somewhat of our despotic sway." However, after a few more remarks about "strong rule" and "noisy democrats" and "our own toadies," the Permanent Official consoles himself with the reflection that "the appointment of an able and unprejudiced commission of inquiry is likely enough to be valuable." *

No time was wasted. Mr. Gladstone landed at Corfu on the 30th of November. He was accompanied by Mrs. Gladstone and one of his daughters, the Hon. Arthur Gordon (afterwards Lord Stanmore), and Sir James Lacaita, who was to act as interpreter and "prompter" in case Mr. Gladstone's Italian failed. They visited all the churches and objects of interest. Mr. Gladstone's eloquence and earnestness, and the enthusiastic interest which he took in everything, seem to have captivated the people. He called on the Bishop, addressed the Senate in Italian, and held a public *levée* at the palace of St. Michael and St. George, where the Greek clergy and all the Corfiotes of any note were presented to him. On the 6th of December, he left for a tour to Cephalonia (where he addressed the Bishop in a public speech), Zante (where he told the excited people that he had come to hear their grievances and not their wishes), and all the other islands except Cerigo. Then he visited Athens. On the 21st of December, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, with their daughter,

* Marindin, Letters of Lord Blachford, pp. 182, 183.

attended a Te Deum at the church of St. Irene. The King and Queen of Greece were present. In the evening he dined at the palace and had a long conversation with the king and queen. With a Mr. Finlay he attended a debate of the Senate, and had all the men pointed out to him who had taken part in the revolution. On the following day he was present in the Chamber of Deputies during a debate on the Greek naval estimates.

On the 18th of January, 1859, Mr. Gladstone left Athens and returned to Corfu, and soon found that the desire of the Ionians for union with Greece was strengthening. He had told the Senate that he wished to avoid ulterior questions:—

"The liberties guaranteed by the Treaties of Paris and by Ionian law are in the eyes of her Majesty sacred. On the other hand the purpose for which she has sent me is not to inquire into the British protectorate, but to examine in what way Great Britain may most honourably and amply discharge the obligation which for purposes European and Ionian rather than British she has contracted."

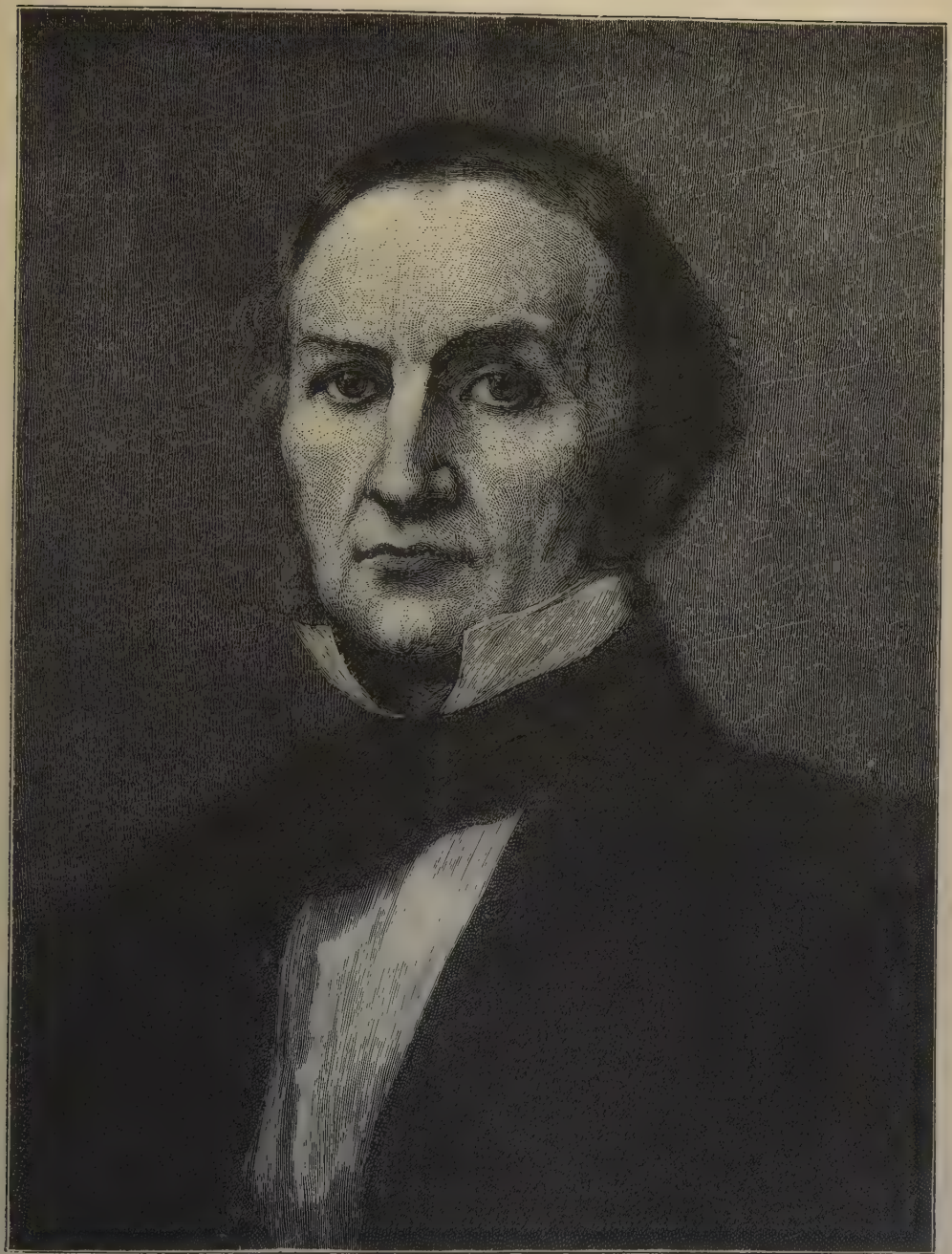
When therefore (on January 27th) the Ionian assembly passed a resolution in favour of union with Greece, the High Commissioner was in a difficulty. However, on the next day he succeeded in persuading them to appoint a committee and proceed by the more constitutional method of petition. In this way the Ionians shortly afterwards obtained self-government; and this result, as well as the subsequent cession of the islands to Greece, was largely due to Mr. Gladstone's exertions and influence. In a letter written thirty years later Mr. Gladstone explained that by accepting this mission he had in no way compromised his political independence or freedom of action:—

"Lord Derby sent me to the Ionian Islands in precisely the same sense as that in which the Government of 1868-74 sent Lord Iddesleigh to America. Both were cases of independent service given in a good cause."*

**An Absurd Story.**

It was time, however, that he should return. Bright, in a great speech at Bradford, had revived the question of Parliamentary Reform, and dissensions were already breaking out in the Cabinet. Mr. Gladstone's absence was beginning to excite considerable comment. The *Saturday Review* fell a victim to the idea that he intended to give up political life and to secure a permanent appointment as King of the Ionian Islands! This on the strength of a rumour that he had purchased a house in Corfu! The *Saturday's* obituary notice is curiously favourable:—"Mr. Gladstone is the first orator in England—that is, he is the first orator in the world. His industry and energy are immense. His courage is equal to any undertaking, quails before no opposition, and suffers no abatement in defeat. He is the most brilliant and original, if not altogether the safest financier of a great commercial country. His reputation for integrity is surpassed by that of no public man. A casuist, he is still no Jesuit." What then prevented him from ruling England? The answer is that he wants "the power of patient, steady, forecasting thought." In his speeches "he drifts amidst universal applause—but still he drifts; and his noble eloquence adorns but does not control the tide." His acceptance of the mission to the Ionian Islands was the final proof of his political infirmity. "He throws up the responsibilities of being a member for

* Letter to Mr. Walter M'Laren, *Times*, May 4th, 1888.



W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1858.
*(From the Painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.)*

one of the first constituencies in the Empire, and accepts from the hands of an insidious rival a third-rate mission for the purpose of indulging a literary and ethnological *amour*."

But Mr. Gladstone's absence was not further prolonged. On the 10th of March he was discussing Exchequer Bills in the House of Commons, and, curiously enough, describing the position he was about to regain.* Meanwhile, the Government was bringing forward its scheme for extending the county franchise. In the debate on the second reading Lord John Russell moved "that no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy the House or the country which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage in cities and boroughs than is contemplated in the present measure." The debate extended over more than a week. On the 29th of March Mr. Gladstone, who opposed both the Bill and Lord John Russell's resolution, made an appeal for the small (rotten) boroughs. He explained his meaning by stating the case of six men—Pelham, Chatham, Fox, Pitt, Canning, and Peel—all of whom found their way into the House through close boroughs at very early ages:—

Back at St. Stephen's, 1859.

A Speech on Close Boroughs.

"What does this show? It shows that small boroughs were the nursery ground in which these men were educated—men who not only were destined to lead this House, to govern this country, to be the strength of England at home and its ornament abroad, but who likewise, when once they had an opportunity of proving their powers in this House, became the chosen of large constituencies and the favourites of the nation."

This speech was one of Mr. Gladstone's last oblations to the spirit of Toryism, and the last defence of close or rotten boroughs by any distinguished statesman on either side of the House. The Government was beaten by 39. Cardwell, Graham, and Herbert joined the Liberals; Mr. Gladstone voted in the minority. It was the fifth Government which Lord John Russell had upset.† A few days later Lord Derby announced that he would dissolve Parliament and appeal to the country. The period of Mr. Gladstone's political uncertainty was almost ended.

F. W. HIRST.

* "The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the greatest banker in the country, and I believe also that he is the greatest operator on the Stock Exchange in England."—Hansard, March 10th, 1859.

† "An appropriation clause may happen to every man once in his life. But there is only one man living of whom it can be said that in 1835 he overthrew the Government of Sir Robert Peel upon an impracticable pretext; that in 1852 he overthrew the Government of Lord Derby with an objectless coalition; that in 1855 he overthrew the Government of Lord Aberdeen by a personal *coup d'état*, and that in 1857 he overthrew the Government of the member for Tiverton by a Parliamentary manœuvre."—Hansard, 31st April, 1859, Disraeli's Speech.

# CHAPTER IX.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, 1853, 1859–1865.

"Room for the mighty master of finance!
Give way! and let his equipage advance!"

THOROLD ROGERS.

Poverty of the Nation in Mr. Gladstone's Early Years—Extravagance the Consequence of Prosperity—The Income-tax—The Financial Situation in 1853—Mr. Gladstone's First Budget—The Alternative to Retaining the Income-tax—Its Origin—The National Debt—Objections to the Income-tax—A Masterpiece of Persuasive Reasoning—Overcoming the Opposition of Colleagues—The Surplus—Effect of the Budget in Stimulating Trade—French Admiration of Mr. Gladstone's Greatness—A Comparison with Cornewall Lewis—The Decay of Economy—Financial Policy in Opposition—Again Chancellor—Sympathy between Lord John Russell and Mr. Gladstone—Disraeli on a Prudent Foreign Policy—The Troubles of a Chancellor—Gladstone and Palmerston—The Commercial Treaty with France—The Budget of 1860—Repealing the Paper-duty—Opposition of the Lords, and What Followed—Mr. Gladstone's Command of Detail—An Analysis by Frederic Rogers—Defects of the Budget of 1860—A Great Speech on Italy—The Budgets of 1861 and 1862—The American Civil War—A Triumphal Progress in the North of England—The Budget of 1863—An Appeal from Ireland—Garibaldi and Gladstone—The Budget of 1864—Working Men and the Franchise—Speeches in Lancashire—Cession of the Ionian Islands—On the Press—Tempting the Chancellor of the Exchequer—A Eulogy of Law and Lawyers—The Budget of 1865—Opposition at Oxford—An Indictment of the Irish Church—Rejected by the University.

THE qualities which are required in a President of the Board of Trade are valuable to a Chancellor of the Exchequer. But it by no means follows that a good President will make a good Chancellor. So, to compare small things with great, an American city will look for some breadth of view, imagination, and originality from its Dictator Mayor; but it will be content and grateful if it finds in the Head of a Department or of a Board honesty, courage, and administrative ability. There was little fear, however, that Sir Robert Peel's trusted lieutenant would disgrace himself when the natural and inevitable logic of politics gave him, in his turn, supreme control of the national finances. And yet, in spite of the wonderful proofs which he had given of his administrative and expository powers at the Board of Trade, in spite of the wholesome terror which he had inspired as critic and destroyer of bad and bungling Budgets, nay, further, in spite of the great expectations which had been founded on these previous exploits, the first actual performance of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer far outran the hopes and fears with which it had been anticipated by friends and rivals.

Before turning to the first, and perhaps the greatest, of his Budget speeches, something, however inadequate, must be said of the qualifications which Mr. Gladstone brought to his new task, and of the difficulties which

he had to overcome. The two keynotes of his financial policy have a close historical connection with his early training. The nation of his youth and early manhood was a poor nation. The great mass of the population was badly fed, badly clothed, and badly housed. The taxes were very oppressive, but not very productive; and English Governments, like English individuals, found it difficult to make both ends meet. It was far harder to raise fifty millions in the middle of the century from a population of 27,000,000 than it is now to raise twice that sum from a population only larger by one third—and this in the face of a steady rise in the standard of comfort which has enlarged the wants and added to the necessaries of every class in the community.

Poverty of the Nation.

But while the necessity for national economy was thus early impressed on Mr. Gladstone's mind, another principle contended in friendly rivalry for supremacy in his Budgets. The success of the two great revisions of the Customs tariff in 1842 and 1845 had convinced him that the principles of simplification ought to be carried to their logical conclusion. He was determined to make the bounds of commercial freedom wider yet. At first the Free Trade principle demanded the largest share of his attention; but we shall see how there gradually grew up in his mind a conviction, slowly and reluctantly formed, that the very measures which he had passed with the object of striking off the fetters from the feet of industry were producing in the nation not only the capacity but also the taste for expenditure. Extravagance proved to be the natural concomitant of prosperity; and Mr. Gladstone saw with consternation and disgust the very income-tax which had been in the hands of Sir Robert Peel and himself an indispensable weapon of commercial reform, perverted into an instrument for increasing the cost, the magnitude, and perhaps even the corruption of our military and civil establishments. To the conflict in Mr. Gladstone's mind of these two principles of Free Trade and public economy may be traced the deviations in the course of his policy with regard to the income-tax, culminating after twenty years in an unsuccessful and, in the opinion of one of his bitterest critics, thoroughly corrupt attempt to get rid of it altogether.

Necessity for Economy.

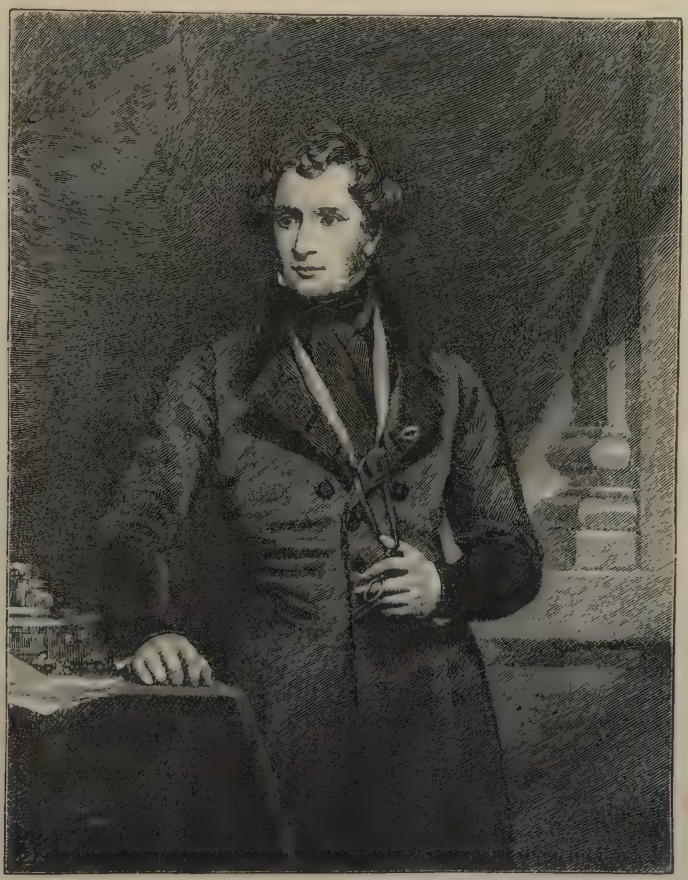
Extending Commercial Freedom.

Extravagance the Consequence of Prosperity.

But when Mr. Gladstone first became Chancellor of the Exchequer, public expenditure had not yet shown any sensible tendency to increase; neither was the work of Free Trade legislation much more than half complete. On the other hand, the difficulty of retaining the income-tax was great. It had been imposed by the authority of Sir Robert Peel in 1842, as the only means of maintaining the national credit and of balancing expenditure by revenue. Success justified and obtained its renewal in 1845. When in 1848 a similar policy was pursued, it seemed as if an income-tax of 7d. in the £ biennially renewed was to become one of the fundamental and unwritten articles of the British Constitution. But the unpopularity of the tax was rapidly growing; and in 1851 Lord Stanley, taking advantage of the turn of opinion, declared it to be an object not only of vital importance, but one to which the faith of successive Ministries had been pledged, that the income-tax should not

The Income-tax.

be permitted to degenerate into a permanent tax. But the tax was in the greatest danger from its most ardent supporters — the Philosophical Radicals and economists, who were so enamoured of the abstract and ideal type which they had formed in their own minds that they were determined to amend and reconstruct its earthly and imperfect copy.



LORD STANLEY, AFTERWARDS THE FOURTEENTH EARL OF DERBY.

*(From a Portrait by H. P. Briggs, R.A., painted about* 1842.)

Hume therefore proposed and carried an amendment in 1851 limiting the renewal of the tax to one year, and appointing a Select Committee of inquiry with a view to improve the methods of assessment and collection.* Cobden saw and voted against the impolicy of his friends, and

* The Committee was unable to agree upon a report; but the evidence taken proved that a reconstruction of the income-tax was eminently desirable and highly impracticable. Most of the members started with the idea of differentiating between realised and precarious income.

Mr. Gladstone not only opposed the appointment of the Committee, but refused to serve on it. In the following year Disraeli's hastily extemporised Budget did not touch the problem, but postponed it by provisionally renewing the income-tax for another year. With Disraeli's second Budget, which Mr. Gladstone so mercilessly destroyed, we need not concern ourselves. Enough that it was found convenient to forget Lord Derby's denunciation of the income-tax. Instead of reducing it with a view to ultimate abolition, Disraeli proposed to rehabilitate it by establishing a trumpery and irritating distinction between realised incomes, which were to pay 7d. in the £, and precarious incomes, which were to pay 5¼d., and also by an ill-judged and ill-received attack upon the principle of exemptions. Exemption, he said, was another phrase for confiscation; and he proposed to extend the tax to industrial incomes of above £100 a year, and to incomes derived from property of above £50 a year.

The difficulties which Mr. Gladstone had to meet in the spring of 1853 were enormous. He had been instrumental in overthrowing his rival's Budget. What was he to put in its place? The income-tax was highly unpopular in the country. The House of Commons had already declared against its prolongation in an unmodified form; but Mr. Gladstone decided that for the time being the advantages of the tax outweighed its disadvantages, and he determined not only to renew it for a longer period than ever before, but also to renew it in an unmodified form. His strong will and financial reputation were, no doubt, elements of success; but the victory was mainly due to the marvellous speech which, in Northcote's words, "not only obtained universal applause from his audience at the time, but changed the convictions of a large part of the nation, and turned —at least for several years—a current of popular opinion which had seemed too powerful for any Minister to resist."*

The Financial Situation in 1853.

Mr. Gladstone began by impressing on the crowded House his sense of the importance of the annual exposition of the financial state and prospects of the country and the increasing interest and "even eagerness" of the people with respect to financial questions. First came a brief review of the revenue and expenditure for the year ending April 5th, 1853. The balance-sheet showed a gratifying surplus of nearly two and a half millions, of which, however, nearly three-fifths was already disposed of, owing to large increases in expenditure. Then followed an estimate of the probable expenditure and revenue for 1853-4; and Mr. Gladstone expressed a "sanguine hope" that a surplus of £800,000 would be realised. But this assumed the continued existence of the income-tax, which, however, "has at this moment legally expired; and it will be for the Committee to consider whether or not they will revive it." One may imagine the buzz of expectancy: the great man was about to part with his secret! Not so. "Before I venture on a detailed and continuous exposition of the views of the Government with respect to prospective finance, there are three incidental questions to which I shall briefly

Mr. Gladstone's First Budget.

* "Twenty Years of Financial Policy," p. 185. Mr. Gladstone's speech, delivered April 18th, 1853, may be found—reprinted, with corrections, from Hansard—in "The Financial Statements of 1853, 1860-3," pp. 1-100. London, Murray, 1863.

advert"; and Mr. Gladstone coolly engages the eager House in a digression upon the shipping interest, and "that which is called the West Indian interest," and the "collateral topic" of the Exchequer Loan Fund. "I now, Sir," he proceeded, "approach a very difficult portion of the task that I have to perform—the discussion of the income-tax. And here the first question that this Committee has to consider is whether or not it will make efforts to part with the income-tax at once." Mr. Gladstone might have denied the possibility of such a course; but he was far too astute. He accepted the alternative as possible, but proposed a substitute—as if it were the only possible substitute—which he knew would be far more distasteful to a majority of the House than the income-tax itself. "I believe that by the conjunction of three measures, one of which must be a tax upon land, houses, and other visible property, of perhaps 6d. in the £, and another a system of licences upon trade made universal, and averaging something like £7, and the third a change in your system of legacy duties, it would be possible for you at once to part with the income-tax." An exhilarating prospect for the majority of his hearers! But, needless to say, her Majesty's Government did "not recommend such a course." Such a system would be "far more unequal" and would "arrest other beneficial forms of taxation." What, then, were the Government's intentions? Surely they could not be any longer withheld. An ordinary Anglo-Saxon would have blurted them out ten minutes earlier. But the House was not yet prepared to applaud. A vague sense of an oppressive alternative was not enough. The subject might be depicted in all or more than all its majestic proportions; imagination might be fired, patriotism kindled, by a glowing historical sketch. Let us mark how the great artist again sets to work:—

The Income-tax: An Alternative to its Retention.

"Now, in regard to the income-tax, I wish that I could possess the Committee with the impression that effort and study have made upon my own mind, of the deep and vital importance of the subject. We are too apt to measure the importance of the subject by the simple fact that we draw from this tax £5,500,000 of revenue. Sir, that sum is a large one, but the mention of it conveys no idea to the Committee of the immense moment and magnitude of the question. If you want to appreciate the income-tax, you must go back to the epoch of its birth; you must consider what it has done for you in times of national peril and emergency; you must consider what, if you do not destroy it—and I will explain afterwards what I mean by destroy—what it may do for you again if it please God that those times should return."

Thus to vote against the income-tax was represented as an action equivalent to political infanticide and in wilful opposition to Divine Providence. And the enormity was aggravated by a retrospect.

"It was in the crisis of the revolutionary war that, when Mr. Pitt found the resources of taxation were failing under him, his mind fell back upon the conception of the income-tax; and, when he proposed it to Parliament, that great man, possessed with his great idea, raised his eloquence to an unusual height and power. . . . I do not know whether the Committee are aware how much the country owes to the former income-tax; but, because I deem it to be of vital importance that you should fully appreciate the power of this colossal engine of finance, I will venture to place before

Origin of the Tax.

you, in what I think an intelligible and striking form, the results which it once achieved. I will draw the comparison between the mode in which your burdens were met during three periods; during that period of the Great War when you had no income-tax; during that period of the war when you had the income-tax in a state of half-efficiency; and during that last and most arduous period of the war when the income-tax was in its full power.

What it had Done.

"From 1793 to 1798, a period of six years, there was no income-tax; from 1799 to 1802 there was an income-tax, but the provisions of the law made it far less effective, in proportion to its rate, than it now is; and lastly, from 1806 to 1815, a period of ten years, you had the income-tax in its full force. Now, every one of us is aware of the enormous weight and enormous mischief that have been entailed upon this country by the accumulation of our Debt; but it is not too much to say that it is demonstrated by the figures that our Debt need not at this moment have existed, if there had been resolution enough to submit to the income-tax at an earlier period. This test of my assertion, I think you will admit, is a fair one. I begin by putting together the whole charge of government and war, together with the charge of so much of the National Debt as had accrued before 1793; so as to make (if I may so express myself) a fair start from 1793. The charge of government and war, together with the charge of debt incurred before 1793, amounted, on the average of the six years, down to 1798, to £36,000,000 a year; the revenue of that period, with all the additional taxes that there were laid on, amounted to £20,626,000 a year; there was, therefore, an annual excess of charge above revenue—charge for government, for war, and for debt contracted before 1793, but not including the charge of debt contracted since 1793—of no less than £15,404,000.

The National Debt.

"Now the scene shifts. In 1798 Mr. Pitt just initiates the income-tax, and immediately a change begins. In the four years from 1799 to 1802, the charges for the same items that I have mentioned, which had been £36,000,000, rose to £47,413,000 a year; but the revenue rose to £33,724,000 a year, and the excess for these four years was diminished by nearly £2,000,000 a year: instead of an annual excess of £15,404,000 over revenue, it was £13,689,000. But next look to the operation of the tax, both direct and collateral, from 1806 to 1815, during the very time when our exertions were greatest, and our charges heaviest. The average annual expenses of war and government, from 1806 to 1815, together with the charge upon the debt contracted before 1793, were £65,794,000; but you had your income-tax in its full force, with your whole financial system invigorated by its effects, and the revenue of the country now amounted to £63,790,000; while the deficiency in actual hard money, which during the war represented something like double the amount in debt, owing to the rate at which you borrowed, instead of being £15,404,000 a year, as it was in the first period, or £13,689,000 a year, as it was in the second period, was only £2,004,000 a year from 1806 to 1815.

"Such was the power of the income-tax. I have said there was a deficiency annually of £24,004,000, but it is fair for you to recollect—and it is necessary in order fully to present to you the fact I want to place in clear view—that out of the £65,794,000 of charge which I have mentioned, about £9,500,000 was due for charges of debt contracted before 1793; so that, if you compare the actual expense of government, including the whole expense of war from 1806 to 1815, with your revenue when you had the income-tax, it stand thus before you, that you actually raised £7,000,000 a year during that period more than the charge of government and the charge of a gigantic war to boot. That, I must say, is to my mind a remarkable fact. It affords to me the proof, that if you do not destroy the efficacy of this engine—I do not raise now the question whether it is to be temporary or permanent, which I hold to be quite a different question, and I will enter upon it by-and-by—it affords you the means, should unhappily hostilities again break out, of at once raising your army to 300,000 men and your fleet to 100,000, with all your establishments in proportion. And, much as may be said of the importance—in which I concur — of an Army Reserve and a Navy Reserve, and of having your armouries and arsenals well stored, I say this fiscal reserve is not one whit less important; for, if it be used aright, it is an engine to which you may again resort; and with this engine, judiciously employed, if unhappily this necessity should again arise—which may God in His mercy avert—with it, judiciously employed you may again, if need be, defy the world."

So far Mr. Gladstone had dwelt only upon the value of the income-tax in time of war, and no doubt the growing apprehension of a struggle with Russia added force to his warning. But the tax was not merely effective as a spear in the hands of a military Pitt, it had also been turned into a pruning-hook by the commercial genius of Peel:—

"Well, Sir, the income-tax dropped, along with the purpose of the income-tax, in 1816; but it was destined to be revived. Sir Robert Peel, in 1842, called forth from repose this giant, who had once shielded us in war, to come and assist our industrious toils in peace; and, if the first income-tax produced enduring and memorable results, so, I am free to say, at less expenditure by far in money, and without those painful accompaniments of havoc, war, and bloodshed, so has the second income-tax. The second income-tax has been the instrument by which you have introduced, and by which I hope ere long you may perfect the reform, the effective reform, of your commercial and fiscal system; and I, for one, am bold enough to hope, nay to expect and believe, that, in reforming your own fiscal and commercial system, you have laid the foundations of similar reforms—slow, perhaps, but certain in their progress—through every country of the civilised world. I say, therefore, Sir, that if we rightly use the income-tax, we shall be entitled when we part with it to look back upon it with some satisfaction, and to console ourselves for the annoyance it may have entailed by the recollection that it has been the means of achieving a great good immediately to England and ultimately to mankind."

The orator has reached the point at which he can assume that his audience agrees that he could not at the present moment, with due regard to the public interest, part with the income-tax. He is now, therefore, at liberty to submit the impost to a closer analysis and to investigate the charges which were alleged against it.

"I am not one of those who make light of such charges. In my own individual opinion it is perfectly plain, from the mode in which the income-tax was put an end to at the termination of the Great War, that it is not well adapted for a permanent portion of your ordinary financial system. Whether it is so or not, a matter on which there is a great difference of opinion, yet I think this is on all hands agreed, that it is not adapted for a permanent portion of your fiscal system, unless you can by reconstruction remove what are called its inequalities. Even, however, if you could remove its inequalities . . . . there would still remain, in my mind at least, objections of the gravest character."

**Objections to the Income-tax.**

Mr. Gladstone's scheme now unfolds itself naturally enough. The preliminary dispositions are complete, and it is seen that any new movement must depend upon three fundamental propositions as to what is practicable, desirable, and possible.

I. That the income-tax must be prolonged for another period of years.

II. That it is certainly undesirable that it should permanently form part of our financial system unless it can be satisfactorily reconstructed.

III. That such reconstruction is impracticable—an opinion which is arrived at after a long, closely argued and exceedingly subtle analysis.

The case against the income-tax as a permanent source of revenue is then summed up as follows:—

"The general views of her Majesty's Government with respect to the income-tax are that it is an engine of gigantic power for great national purposes; but at the same time, that there are circumstances attending its operation which make it difficult, perhaps impossible, at any rate in our opinion not desirable, to maintain it as a portion of the permanent and ordinary finances of the country. The public feeling of its inequality is a fact most important in itself. The inquisition it entails is a most serious disadvantage; and the frauds to which it leads are an evil which it is not possible to characterise in terms too strong."

**Undesirable as a Permanent Tax.**

The scheme which Mr. Gladstone proposes is the natural result of the three conclusions; and it corresponds with the doctrine which he has just laid down, that whatever you do "you must be bold, you must be intelligible, you must be decisive":—

Mr. Gladstone's Scheme.

"Our proposition, then, so far as it merely regards the income-tax, is this. We propose to renew it for two years from April, 1853, at the rate of 7d. in the £. The Committee will recollect, that I said we thought it our duty to look the whole breadth of this difficulty in the face; not to endeavour to escape it, not to endeavour to attenuate or to understate it, but to face and to settle, if the Committee would enable us, the whole question of the income-tax. We propose, then, to re-enact it for two years, from April, 1853, to April, 1855, at the rate of 7d. in the £; from April, 1855, to enact it for two more years at 6d. in the £; and then for three years more—I cannot wonder at the smile which I perceive that my words provoke—for three more years—from April, 1857, at 5d. Under this proposal, on the 5th of April, 1860, the income-tax will by law expire."

A Masterpiece of Persuasive Reasoning.

Unfortunately, no summary can do justice, or anything like justice, to this, perhaps the most wonderful passage of persuasive and successful reasoning which is to be found in the records of British oratory. There is nothing plain or simple about the position which is sought to be established. The tax was unpopular; the speaker admitted that it had many bad points. And yet this proposal of a new and untried Chancellor of the Exchequer to extend it for seven years—a period more than twice as long as that which Sir Robert Peel himself had ventured to ask for—excited enthusiastic approval. The subject is difficult, its treatment is subtle; yet so lucid is the exposition, so fascinating the art, so alluring the argument, that the veriest layman may understand, find pleasure, and be convinced. And if this be true of the reader, what must it have been for the hearer, who received it through the medium of the matchless voice and speaking gesture!

Minor Features of the Budget.

The reimposition of the income-tax was insufficient to give Mr. Gladstone the surplus which he required for his operations on the tariff. He therefore lowered the rate of exemption to incomes of £100 a year. This, he calculated, would bring in £250,000 annually. The income-tax was also to be extended to Ireland, to which country a large, but scarcely an equivalent, boon was at the same time granted in the shape of a remission of the debt of £4,500,000 due for the advances made during the Irish famine from the Imperial Exchequer. At the same time he raised the duties on Scotch and Irish spirits, and proposed a revision of trade licences* in the interests of the revenue.

The Succession Duty.

But of all the minor proposals, perhaps the boldest and the most difficult to carry through was the succession duty, which extended to successions in real property duties similar to those payable in the case of legacies. This, by a strange miscalculation, was to produce an immediate addition of half a million, and an ultimate addition of no less than two millions, to the revenue.

* This, however, was abandoned.

† In 1852 the legacy duty produced £1,380,000. In 1860 the legacy and succession duties together produced £2,169,000. The increase is only £711,000, and even of that only £605,000

The Succession Duty Bill was not original, being, in fact, similar to that which Pitt was compelled to withdraw in 1796. Pitt was beaten on the third reading in the House. Mr. Gladstone, however, had to win a preliminary victory in the Cabinet. The story is well known and authentic. Nassau Senior, who spent some days in the September of 1850 at Haddo, in Aberdeenshire, with Lord Aberdeen, reported in his diary a conversation in which they discussed Mr. Gladstone's limitations. "Gladstone's great fault," said one of the company, is that "he seems incapable of estimating the relative force of arguments. He does not see that, though there may be valid objections to a measure, those objections perhaps ought to be disregarded." "I agree," said Lord Aberdeen, "that Gladstone does not weigh well against one another different arguments, each of which has a real foundation. But he is unrivalled in his power of proving that a specious argument has no real foundation. On the Succession Bill the whole Cabinet was against him. He delivered to us much the same speech which he made to the House of Commons. At the close we were all convinced." *

**A Struggle in the Cabinet.**

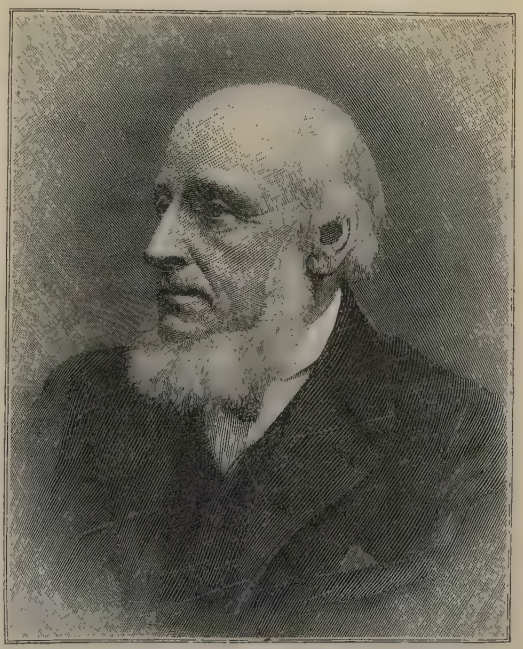


*Photo: Gerrard, Regent Street, W.*

LORD THRING.

The Succession Duty Bill was one of the most complicated and technical pieces of legislation which even Mr. Gladstone ever undertook. But Lord Thring, who drew it, declares that Mr. Gladstone understood it as well as Bethell, that is to say, perfectly. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could be a lawyer when occasion required, as well as a theologian and an economist. The Bill was passed; and a first step towards equalising the spirit duties was equally successful, although there, too, several of his predecessors had tried and failed. The process was completed in 1858.

So much for the revenue. The changes would, it was calculated, give a surplus of £2,151,000, which would be available for the remission of

can be put to the credit of the succession duty. One naturally contrasts Mr. Gladstone's disappointment with the extreme accuracy of Sir William Harcourt's forecast with regard to the death duties of 1894. Ought the difference to be ascribed to the growth of a prophetic instinct in the Inland Revenue Department? Mr. Gladstone tried to account for his miscalculation in the Budget speech of 1860.

* Mrs. Simpson's "Many Memories of Many People," p. 237.

taxation. In the first place, the tax which the State in its wisdom had imposed upon cleanliness—the excise duty on soap—was repealed, a change which—to the credit of our ancestors—involved a considerable loss of revenue. The advertisement duty was also abolished, and a great reform was carried out in the whole system of assessed taxes. But Mr. Gladstone did not confine his attention to the Inland Revenue. Another great sweep, resembling those of 1842 and 1845, was made under the head of Customs. Protective and discriminating and *ad valorem* duties were largely abandoned. No less than 123 articles were entirely removed from the tariff, and the duties upon 133 others were reduced. Altogether the remissions of indirect taxation amounted to not less than £5,384,000.

**The Surplus, and How it was Used.**

These remissions, like the additions, are closely connected with the income-tax scheme, which is, as it were, the centre round which all the rest of the Budget revolves :—

"With this remission of indirect taxation we propose to continue the bringing about a state of things, or the rational prospect of a state of things, in which you can, if you so think fit, really part with the income-tax."

But the Crimean War interfered with the realisation of Mr. Gladstone's schemes. This catastrophe, coupled with a bad harvest, had another unfortunate consequence. It frustrated an attempted operation upon consols. The three per cents. stood in December, 1852, at 101¼. It was thought that interest would fall yet further; and, as everyone knows, for financial operations an expectation of a fall is almost as good as the fall itself. Mr. Gladstone proposed to reduce the three per cent. stock to two-and-a-half per cent., and tried to seduce the fundholder from his stronghold by offering him three choices. The triple snare was happily conceived; but the trapper made a grave blunder by allowing his featherless bipeds a period of six months within which to exercise their option. Nothing was to be lost by waiting; and the temptation steadily weakened, until at the end of the period none of the three offers was in the least acceptable.*

**Consols.**

This remarkable Budget of 1853, which we have singled out for special notice as perhaps the most brilliant of Mr. Gladstone's achievements in the House of Commons, is distinguished by the breadth and diversity of its aims, the boldness of its conception, and the immense benefits which its successful passage conferred upon the nation. If a fresh stimulus had not been given to commerce, and if the credit of the income-tax had not been revived, it is hardly possible that our trade and finance could have stood out so stoutly against the strain of the Crimean War, when those of our enemy and of our chief ally underwent so considerable an abatement. Two sets of figures will suffice to prove the vigour of British commerce. Take first the exports of textile fabrics from the United Kingdom :—

**Results of the Budget.**

| In 1853. | In 1855. | In 1856. |
|---|---|---|
| £52,299,000. | £51,123,000. | £59,915,000. |

*For a further account of this interesting failure see Northcote's "Twenty Years of Financial Policy," pp. 220–234. Oddly enough, Northcote fails to point out Mr. Gladstone's cardinal error. Attention was drawn to it after the publication of "Gladstone's Financial Statements," by an able reviewer in the *Times*.

Take again the returns of British shipping, that is, of the tonnage of British vessels in cargo entered and cleared in the same three years:—

| 1853. | 1855. | 1856. |
|---|---|---|
| 9,064,000 tons. | 9,211,000 tons. | 10,971,000 tons. |

The simple figures are as eloquent in their way as Mr. Gladstone's speeches; for a great financier must be judged by the statistics which ensue upon as well as those which are enclosed in his Budget. Enlightened Frenchmen were watching Mr. Gladstone with admiration and England with jealousy.* In Nassau Senior's "Conversations" occurs an account of a dinner with the Duc de Broglie in the spring of 1853: "The Broglies," says Senior, "go to Claremont next week, and could only talk English politics. As I have found everywhere the case in Paris, they are astonished at the boldness and comprehensiveness of our Budget." Prince Albert de Broglie was struck by the contrast which Mr. Gladstone's Budget presented "not merely to the miserable mixture of fraud and routine" then before the Corps Législatif, but even to the finance of the best times of the monarchy. "We do not form plans which require years of tranquillity for their accomplishment. We do not consider the Budget as a means of civilisation and progress; with us it is merely a machine for getting money to pay the Army, the Navy, the Court, the clergy, and the public creditor with as little trouble and therefore with as little innovation as possible. If we find that we have a surplus we increase our establishments; if there is a deficit we issue *bons de trésor*, or anticipate the receipts of future years."

French Admiration.

From the French negative we get the positive characteristics of the greatest of English financiers. What if, instead of Budgets which postulated peace, compelled retrenchment, and inaugurated reform, England in '53 and the early sixties had adopted French finance, had used prosperity to bloat bureaucracy, and had met adversity by bloating the Debt? It is only by comprehending its might-have-beens that a country can realise its good fortune.

These French politicians were impressed by Mr. Gladstone's great qualities. A Guizot or a Thiers, even if he had been a Free Trader, would have been paralysed by the prejudices of those around him.

"A constitutional Minister can seldom be much in advance of his age. But if we could have a really philosophical Minister now, if Louis Napoleon could find a Gladstone, and had also sense and courage to employ him, what wonders he might do! With what a swing would France press on to take the first position among civilised nations if the fetters of prohibition were knocked off her limbs!"

So wrote Faucher; and indeed a Gladstone might have saved France and French trade from their relative decline. What struck the Duc de Broglie most was the *success* of Mr. Gladstone's propositions. "I have heard you say," he remarked to Nassau Senior, "that a clever, original Budget must turn out a Ministry, since those who are touched scream, and those who are relieved are silent. Here is a Budget which touches everyone, and bears heaviest on those who are most apt to scream, the landed interest,

* No doubt the Budget of 1853 and its marvellous success helped to convert Louis Napoleon to Free Trade, and to bring about the Commercial Treaty of 1860.

the Irish, and the ten-pounders; and yet it seems to pass by acclamation." Rémusat, who replied, seems to have hit upon something like the right explanation:—

"What saves it is its comprehensiveness. Everyone is touched, but everyone is relieved. Then the portions of it which are most startling from their novelty are most supported by their justice. The exemptions enjoyed by Ireland, by the land, and by the £150 incomes were indignantly submitted to, because it was supposed that any Chancellor of the Exchequer who dared to grapple with them would be worsted. The bulk of the English would feel that Gladstone is their champion against certain privileged classes. They wonder at his courage, admire his skill, and are determined that he shall not be beaten."

Cornewall Lewis: A Comparison.

We have alluded in a previous chapter to the courage with which Mr. Gladstone, in 1854, insisted on trying to provide for the expenses of the war out of current revenue, and to his duel with Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the patient, business-like, unimaginative, and—by comparison—ineffective Chancellor who succeeded him when he resigned in 1855. Lewis's one object was to balance accounts. Mr. Gladstone wanted him to swim; he was quite content to float. Lewis's Budget speeches show his great knowledge and capacity. His stolid courage proved useful in the Bank crisis. He was a good borrower, perhaps, but hardly a financier in the higher sense of the word, still less a great practical statesman—except in the pages of his friend and admirer Walter Bagehot.

The Decay of Economy.

In 1857 the war was over, and an agitation began in the country against "the war ninepence." Unhappily, though the feeling against war taxation was strong, there was no corresponding desire for the reduction of our military establishments. "If I were to attempt to paint the humour at the present moment," said Mr. Gladstone in the debate on the Address, "I should say that it was jealous with respect to taxation, but perfectly reckless with regard to expenditure. It is considered well worth while to debate the question of direct and indirect taxation, as if there were not a moral certainty that for all the years during which the youngest of us draws breath, both the admirers of direct taxation and the worshippers of indirect taxation will have ample opportunities of contemplating even to idolatry the working of these respective principles in the discordant financial system of the country. There is not the slightest fear of the disappearance of either the direct or indirect tax-gatherers."*

In the debate on the Budget he touched on the same theme—the change which since 1853 had passed over the temper of the Government, of the departments, of the House of Commons, and of the country. This change he believed to be in the main the natural and necessary result of war. A period of war is one in which a speculative philosopher might expect the exercise of a peculiar economy in all the branches of State service.

"But the case is practically just the reverse. You contract a habit of extravagance. Wars of necessity mean reckless expenditure, useless and worse than useless expense; and even if there were an attempt to control it, nothing worth naming could be done. But the civil expenditure of the State and the temper of the House of Commons are infected with this habit of extravagance, and see what is the result. The expenditure of the country did not increase from 1842 to 1853. From 1842 to 1853 you discharged your duty—

* Hansard, February 3rd, 1857.

your first duty—as stewards of the money of the people of England, by giving them an account which showed that, notwithstanding the growth of population, the extension of trade and the creation of a multitude of new public services, they were yet served at no greater cost than was thrown upon them ten years before. What is the case now? Why, the estimates of 1856–7 as compared with the expenditure of 1853 show an augmentation of £7,000,000. In twelve years you had a growth of £234,000. In four years you have a growth of seven millions."

SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS.

The years 1841–1853 were golden years of public economy, years when "we had begun to hope that we had almost banished the term 'deficiency' from our vocabulary as well as from our recollection."

This Budget of 1857 was excessively annoying to Mr. Gladstone. In the first place, though peace had been restored, the Army and Navy Estimates were £3,400,000 more than for 1853. In the second place, Cornewall Lewis—who had a perfect genius for stating exploded heresies as if they were truisms coolly declared against the doctrine of simplification of taxes, and went out of his way to endorse Arthur Young's definition of a good system of taxation as one which would "bear lightly on an infinite number of points, heavily on none." He therefore fixed the income-tax at 7d., maintained the indirect taxation which had been

imposed for war purposes, and generally resisted the attempt made by Disraeli and Gladstone to bring about a reduction of expenditure. Mr. Gladstone's speech abounds in passages of eloquent and almost passionate indignation. He declared his intention of voting for the amendment proposed by Disraeli, which, if passed, would have forced the Government to reduce their expenditure, and bring it down to something like the standard of 1853. Mr. Gladstone's protest against the growth of national extravagance is well worthy of quotation:—

"The proposal of the Government shows a glaring, gross, and increasing deficiency—a deficiency unparalleled by anything I can recollect during an experience of some twenty-five years. The first duty of the House of Commons is to say that it will have no deficiency; and when we have once said that, our course will be clear, because if we are to have no deficiency we must square our accounts, either by keeping on existing taxes, or by laying on new taxes, or by reducing expenditure. On a former evening I ventured to comment on the extraordinary indifference of the public mind on the subject of expenditure, and I expressed my opinion of the dangerous enlargement which our expenditure was assuming. . . . I am afraid if it comes to a question of expenditure (however rash it may be) and deficiency, the deficiency will be preferred; because the deficiency is prospective; it is still a little distant; it is not immediate, and something or other may happen in the interval to avert it. . . . Every year that a man lives he learns to estimate more humbly his own powers; he must be content to see remain unaccomplished much that he may earnestly desire; but in this free, happy country there is one privilege, and one corresponding duty, which remains to man—it is to bear his testimony in open day to the duty and the necessity of maintaining public obligations, and to strip away every veil from every scheme which tends to undermine this principle."

Unfortunately, Lord John Russell and Cardwell supported the Government, and Disraeli's resolution was lost by 286 to 206. Lewis, however, had to give up his idea of regulating the finances of the next three years, and confine himself to a regulation extending over one year only; for on the 3rd of March the Government suffered a defeat on Mr. Cobden's motion condemning their Chinese policy. But in the following August the tea and sugar duties were fixed for three years, in accordance with his original intention.

**Financial Policy in Opposition.**

The drift of Mr. Gladstone's policy during these years of opposition may be briefly stated. He chafed at the growing expenditure of the Government, and raged at the discovery that the income-tax, which he had reimposed in order to complete the work of Free Trade, was being continued in order to maintain a high rate of expenditure upon the military and civil services. Knowing how much easier it is to expand than to retrench, he saw plainly that the extinction of the income-tax, which he had arranged for 1860, was disappearing into a dimmer and dimmer distance. And when in 1859 Mr. Gladstone once more became Chancellor of the Exchequer, he could not, of course, proceed as if the nation had continued on the lines of economy and sound commercial policy which he had marked out in 1853. We shall, therefore, avoid Bagehot's curiously superficial discovery of an "entire inconsistency in abstract principle between the Budget of 1853 and the Budget of 1860."*

* "Biographical Studies," 1895 edition, p. 113. There is something attractive in Bagehot's proposition that Mr. Gladstone's mind was more "adhesive" to projects than principles. But the one illustration which he gives, viz. Mr. Gladstone's income-tax policy, is singularly unfortunate.

After winning his election at Oxford in the summer of 1859—so sudden a step as his junction with a Liberal Government naturally provoked a contest—Mr. Gladstone had little time to prepare a Budget.* The Chinese War, which culminated in the disaster at the mouth of the Peiho in June, 1859, had proved an expensive luxury. "Our predecessors," said Mr. Gladstone, referring back to this period a few years later, "in the exercise of their diplomatic wisdom, had to instruct our ambassador to sign a treaty with China, and it appeared to them that the signing of a treaty was an operation which could not possibly be satisfactorily performed without a large fleet." Consequently there was a deficiency of more than four millions to be provided. Mr. Gladstone, true to his own principles, refused to resort to a loan or to increase indirect taxation. In spite of violent opposition he heroically demanded and obtained an increase of the income-tax from 5d. to 9d. in the £, thus converting the deficit into a surplus, which, though only estimated at a quarter of a million, resulted, thanks to a temporary collapse of the war, in a real surplus of a million and a half, and made possible—for a Gladstone—the marvellous Budget of 1860.

Again Chancellor, 1859.

Though the Ministry formed by Lord Palmerston in 1859 commanded a large majority in the House, the elements which composed that majority were not homogeneous, and the Cabinet reflected the dissensions of its supporters. Palmerston was against any sort of domestic reform excepting only that minimum which might be a necessary condition to remaining in office. Lord John Russell, who represented a section of genuine Whigs and moderate Liberals, was pledged to reform; but his time and energies were devoted mainly to foreign affairs. As Foreign Secretary Lord John showed himself a sincere friend of liberty abroad, and especially a champion of Italian unity. Indeed, a wit aptly described his principal aim as the establishment of a Brooks's Club in Florence. Their common sympathy with Italian patriotism drew Mr. Gladstone and Lord John Russell together; and in the long struggle for economy which he waged with the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer could generally count upon the support of the Foreign Secretary.

Dissensions in the Cabinet.

Outside the Cabinet he could cope not unsuccessfully with his great rival. Thus on July 21, 1859, Disraeli made some observations upon the prudence and success of the foreign and financial policy of the late Government. Let the present Government, he said, endeavour to emulate and develop their maxims. Some people were not satisfied as to the designs of France:—"I know there are persons who had expected that the Emperor of the French, a Roman Catholic prince, the first child of the Church, and exercising an arbitrary and despotic sway, was about to establish in Italy the Protestant religion and the British constitution." But in spite of evangelical disappointment that illustrious prince ought to be conciliated; every cottage and cabin in England and France ought to be assured that the "disastrous system of rival armaments" would be

Disraeli on a Prudent Foreign Policy.

* Palmerston, coming in with a large majority, had offered Mr. Gladstone the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and the offer was accepted.

put an end to, and that "peace is really our policy."* The Chancellor of the Exchequer might then look without apprehension to his next Budget, and "England might actually witness the termination of the income-tax." Mr. Gladstone's reply is in his best debating style. "A mere journeyman Chancellor of the Exchequer," like himself, was unequal to the range of such a speech. He felt himself "out of his true regions." Nevertheless, "these continual vaunts and flourishes" were subjected to some very severe analysis. He was a sceptic as to the "great and magical results" which were to be obtained by simply following out the policy of his predecessor. It was far from likely that the income-tax would be abolished; the difficulties in the financial condition of the country were "constantly increasing." A colleague of Lord Palmerston's could not speak his mind upon the growth of military expenditure; but the increase of civil expenditure offered an equally congenial topic. This increase had been described as natural, legitimate, normal, and proportioned to the growing wealth and population of the country. To this Mr. Gladstone could not assent:—

Gladstone's Reply.

The Growth of Expenditure.

"It is perfectly true that there is a great expansion of social wants and of social demands, which entail increasing calls upon the public purse; but it is also true that up to the year 1853—the last year before the Russian War—you had that same expansion of wants and demands going on. Up to that period, however, you had practically, by your wise thrift and economy, been able to meet those wants and demands . . . . But what has been the state of things since 1853? It is useless to blink the fact that not merely within the circle of the public departments, but throughout the country at large, and within the precincts of this House—the guardian of the purse of the people—the spirit of public economy has been relaxed; charges upon the public funds of every kind have been admitted from time to time upon slight examination; every man's petition and prayer for this or that expenditure has been conceded with a facility which I do not hesitate to say you have only to continue for some five or ten years longer in order to bring the finances of the country into a state of absolute confusion, and to drive this House to the alternative either of imposing permanently the severest taxes at their highest standard upon the people, or of purchasing an ignominious repose by the practice of annually borrowing to meet your expenditure."

In these words we have the keynote of Mr. Gladstone's later financial policy. It was a long series of gallant efforts to restore the credit of Burke's favourite maxim, *Magnum vectigal est parsimonia*. He strove, and for a time with some success, to recall the House of Commons and the country to the temper and spirit which ruled public expenditure in the period between the Reform Bill and the Russian War But he was beaten in the end. What is economy to a poor is meanness to a rich nation. Three years later Mr. Gladstone opened his mind to a public audience at Manchester upon the disagreeable experiences of his second tenure of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer:—

The Troubles of a Chancellor.

"It is never a very popular office. . . . A very large part of his time is, even under the happiest circumstances, spent in saying to those who demand public expenditure 'No,

* "Go to your great ally, the Emperor of the French," said Disraeli, and ask him "to join you in a spirit of reciprocal confidence . . . . and thus achieve conquests far more valuable than Lombardy." This splendid oration, in which Disraeli pinned his political faith to "a reduction of armaments," has not received the attention it deserves.

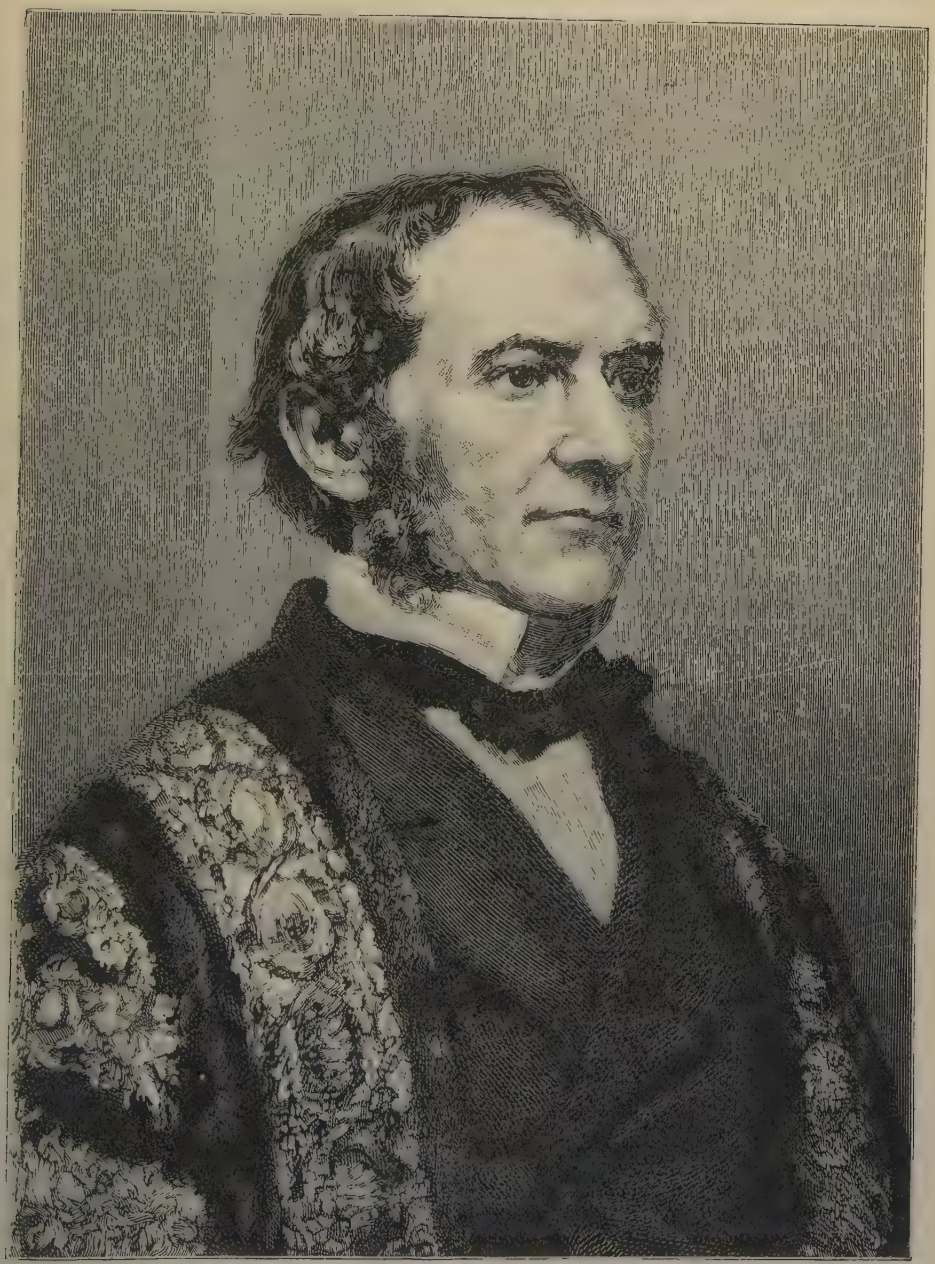


*Photo: Samuel A Walker.*

MR. GLADSTONE IN 1859, WEARING HIS ROBES AS CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

no, no!' When I first held that office I found the function not altogether agreeable, but still practicable. During the second time I held it I found at once that all the powers of resistance and negation, so to speak, were taxed infinitely more, and that the results were infinitely less. The time of great expenditure is the time when the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not in a paradise."*

The powers of resistance and negation were called into play chiefly by Lord Palmerston's crotchet for erecting useless fortifications. Mr. Evelyn Ashley, who was private secretary to Lord Palmerston when Mr. Gladstone was his Chancellor of the Exchequer, has recorded in some interesting reminiscences † how evidently the two misunderstood and mistrusted one another. He attributes it to a variety of causes. In the first place, Mr. Gladstone, he thinks, "was no judge of men as individuals," however profound his "intuition of the instincts and aspirations which sway large bodies of men." Secondly and especially, "the light and airy mode of treating questions—inheritance and tradition of the school of which Lord Melbourne, Lord Palmerston and Lord Derby were the last representatives—was an enigma to him." One might go further and say that he detested that air of indifference which may or may not have veiled a deep sense of responsibility. On the other hand, Lord Palmerston was afraid of a statesman whose regard for public economy clashed with his own desire for expenditure on national defence. Mr. Gladstone did not want to insure the nation at too high a rate; but Palmerston relied upon jingo expenditure as well as upon jingo claptrap for his popularity in the country. And lastly, Mr. Gladstone was too closely in touch with public opinion to please his chief, whose own feelings about platform oratory were expressed in the remark that "a man may be *either* a Minister *or* an agitator."‡

Gladstone and Palmerston.

The years 1860 and 1861 are important ones in Mr. Gladstone's life. The Liberal party began to regard him with increasing confidence, and his popularity, like the prosperity of the country, advanced by leaps and bounds. And yet at the beginning of 1860 the difficulties which stood in the way of the Chancellor of the Exchequer might well have seemed insuperable. In the first place, he had set his heart upon a commercial treaty with France. If it had been necessary to arrange a war, or even a *fête*, with Louis Napoleon, the ordinary diplomatic channels would have been available. But it would have been unfair to young gentlemen with genealogies and incomes to expect from them a knowledge of economic and commercial problems. Accordingly the treaty, to be arranged at all, had to be arranged by a layman. Mr. Gladstone insisted, and Cobden was chosen.§ It is difficult to say whether the treaty or the method of negotiating it excited the greater disgust in the upper circles

The Commercial Treaty with France.

* Speech at Manchester, April 4th, 1862.

† *National Review*, June, 1898.

‡ Mr. Gladstone was constantly threatening to resign. It was said that Lord Palmerston once set his chimney on fire by burning the letters of resignation which he had received during a single Session from his Chancellor of the Exchequer.

§ The *Times* thought it should have been placed in the hands of "an experienced diplomatist."

of society. The opposition in these influential quarters was reinforced by the various protected interests, which saw that the last hour of their monopoly was about to strike. For a short time Milner Gibson was away; and there was no one in the Ministry to give any cordial or useful support to Mr. Gladstone. The Duke of Somerset worked against the treaty. Milner Gibson's absence threw some extra work on Mr. Gladstone; yet he found time not only for his own immediate work, but also for exhaustive letters—almost treatises—to the officials of the Board of Trade. They, poor men, wanted not nicely balanced essays but instructions, not parallel lines of arguments but conclusions, not indicatives but imperatives.

But somehow or other the treaty was concluded, and the last of the Three Panics which had excited the contemptuous ridicule of Cobden* ended very appropriately in Englishmen receiving from the natural enemies of their race 1,500 pairs of boots at cost price.

**The Budget of 1860.**

At the beginning of February the Budget was ready; but Mr. Gladstone was laid up with a cold. There was a delay of two days. When would the great performer be in voice? Great was the suspense. "What Sir Robert Peel's holiday tour was in October, 1834, Mr. Gladstone's cold was in February, 1860." But the suspense was barely hopeful. What could he make of an estimated deficiency of £9,400,000? How could a tolerable Budget be manufactured out of materials so intolerable? It was well understood that Mr. Gladstone would have to renew the income-tax at a figure which would require "all the gilding" of his "most oleaginous oratory" to make it slip down unquestioned. And this for the sake of admitting light French wines at reduced duties!

"Country squires, professional men of all classes who cannot distinguish vintages and do not know a Latour 1847, or Lafitte 1844, from a St. Emilion 1859, silk weavers who think of Lyons as their natural enemy, and English clockmakers who speak with dread of Paris clocks, require a very finished effort of oratory to accommodate themselves to the necessity of paying ninepence in the pound for a change which at first view does not strike them as being worth the money." †

But all these discontented murmurs were dispelled by the voice of the magician. "At the end of two days' delay," writes Greville, "he came forth and *consensu omnium* achieved one of the greatest triumphs that the House of Commons ever witnessed."

Mr. Gladstone's scheme was based on a reimposition of the income-tax at 10d. for one year upon incomes of over £150 and at 7d. on incomes not exceeding £150, and of the sugar and tea duties at the rates at which they had stood since the Crimean War. He reimposed the income-tax because the high level of expenditure was no reason why "we should arrest the process of reforming the commercial legislation of the country." High taxation, so far from being a reason for stopping short in these reforms, "is, when largely viewed, rather a reason why we should persevere in them. For it is by means of these very reforms that we are enabled to bear high taxation." The tea and sugar duties were reimposed not

* The scare of a French invasion, used if not manufactured by Palmerston as a pretext for his fortification scheme.

† *Times*, Monday, February 6th, 1860.

because they had no claims to be remitted—for they had a presumptive claim to the first consideration as harmless and beneficial articles and articles of universal consumption—but because "these are not the subjects on which it has appeared to the Government that they can operate with the greatest advantage." Mr. Gladstone hoped to do something for tea and sugar in the future. But the tea and sugar duties were simple revenue duties. "They entail no complexity in the system of Customs law; above all, they entail none of the evils that belong to differential duties." It was possible to do even more good to the labouring classes by other means than by simply cheapening their food.

"If you want to do them the maximum of good, you should rather operate on the articles which give them the maximum of employment. . . . Take the great change in the Corn Laws; it may even possibly be doubted whether, up to this time, you have given them cheaper bread; at best it has been but a trifle cheaper than before. That change, however, is one material indeed, yet, it may almost be said, comparatively immaterial. But you have created a regular and steady trade in corn, which may be stated at £15,000,000 a year; by that trade you have created a corresponding demand for the commodities of which they are the producers, their labour being an essential and principal element in their production; and it is the enhanced price their labour thus brings, even more than the cheapened price of commodities, that forms the main benefit they receive."

The passage is peculiarly interesting for the complete confirmation which it gives to the views which Mr. Gladstone expressed in conversation at the time of the Corn Law Repeal.*

What, then, were to be the remissions and reductions? They fall into two classes—those connected and those not connected with the French Commercial Treaty.

| | Loss to Revenue. |
|---|---|
| **I. Under the Commercial Treaty with France.** | |
| A. Duties repealed on— | |
| Silk manufactures, gloves, artificial flowers, watches, oils, leather, china, glass, musical instruments, linen manufactures, woollens, miscellaneous articles (*e.g.* agates, silks, cherries, bonnets, etc.) | £450,000 |
| B. Duties reduced on— | |
| 1. Wine (from 5s. 10d. to 3s. per gallon) | £515,000 |
| 2. Brandy (from 15s. to 8s. 2d. per gallon) | £225,000 |
| **II. Not under the Commercial Treaty with France.** | |
| A. Customs duties. | |
| 1. Duties repealed on— | |
| Butter, tallow, cheese, oranges and lemons, eggs, nuts, nutmegs, paper, liquorice, dates and miscellaneous articles (*e.g.* onions, jet, quassia, mustard, oilcloth, cinnamon, etc.) | £382,000 |
| 2. Duties reduced on— | |
| Timber, currants, raisins and figs, and minor articles | £528 000 |
| B. Excise duties. | |
| 1. Repeal of the paper duty from the 1st of July, 1860.<br>2. Reduction of hop duty.<br>3. Reduction of game certificates. | £990,000 |

The total loss to the revenue by these alterations was therefore calculated at £3,090,000; but it was expected that the relief to the British consumer (quite apart from the reciprocal advantages given by France to

* See p. 305

our manufactures) would be £3,931,000. It was also expected that this great scheme of simplification would produce an immediate annual saving of £50,000 in the Customs department, and of £36,000 in the Inland Revenue department. That is hardly surprising, for the articles subject to Customs duties, which since 1842 had been gradually reduced from 1,052 to 419, were now at one stroke brought down to 48. The repeal of the Excise duty on paper was no sudden decision. As we have seen, Mr. Gladstone had already pronounced against it on several occasions. Before taking a final decision he asked the agitators against the duty to furnish their reasons in a series of short propositions. They sent fifteen arguments, and Mr. Gladstone forwarded them to the Board of Inland Revenue. "The heads of the Department said that two of the propositions were questions of Political Economy, upon which they would give no opinion, but that with regard to the other thirteen they agreed with the agitators."

**Repeal of the Paper Duty.**

But the repeal was not to be accomplished until the following year. Even in a professedly Liberal House of Commons there was a widespread fear of the levelling influence of a cheap press. The Chancellor of the Exchequer fought hard; pointed out the "cluster of monopolies" which grew out of the duty, and appealed on behalf of the poor, who could scarcely buy a simple article of daily consumption which was not "wrapped in paper that enhances its price." Moreover, the repeal of the duty on the raw material might lead to almost unlimited developments; and on one occasion, to enforce this point, he brought down a specimen with him to the House in the hope that persuasion, if it failed at the ear, might enter in at the eye:—

"I hold in my hand a material which is as rigid as corrugated iron. It costs a very small fraction of what corrugated iron would cost. It is entirely uninflammable. It is not in any degree acted on by temperature; it is made entirely impervious to moisture by a coating of pitch. It is a sheet of corrugated paper made for the roofing of houses; and I venture to tell my right hon. friend that if we had been in the possession of this material in the winter of 1854, when shelter was wanted for our troops in the Crimea, and when the best expedient was to send out thousands of tents and wooden huts, which, when they arrived at Balaclava, could not on account of their weight be taken up to the camp, we might have saved not only a vast amount of treasure, but many thousand valuable lives." *

The Commons passed the Bill by dwindling majorities, and the Lords encouraged by the narrowness of the last division, and primed with a quotation from the Latin Grammar † by the venerable Lord Lyndhurst, rejected it by a majority of 89. The remainder of the history may be briefly told. Lord Palmerston, who was secretly well enough pleased at

**The Lords Oppose.**

* Hansard, March 12th, 1860. The device was neatly exposed five weeks later by Lord Robert Cecil:—Chancellors of the Exchequer "always hold in their hand something," he complained in a clever attack upon the abolition of the paper duties (May 6th, 1861). When Sir Robert Peel was abolishing the glass duty, he had talked of the uses to which "this beautiful fabric might be put." Great glass manufactures would spring up for water pipes and watches. "I hold in my hand the balance spring of a chronometer made of glass." So Sir Robert Peel. It was hard that the trick, revived after so long an interval, could not pass as original.

† "The same scheme may bear the impress of genius, of imprudence, of rashness *Satis eloquentiæ sapientiæ parum* is not an irreconcilable combination."

what had happened, proposed some mildly worded resolutions affirming the right of the House of Commons to control taxation. Mr. Gladstone was furious at what he naturally and properly regarded as an unconstitutional course—the maintenance by the Lords of a tax which the representatives of the people had repealed. But he took his revenge in the following year by a step which has ever since excluded the House of Lords from all participation in financial measures. In Mr. Gladstone's own words, "the House of Lords took little benefit thereby, for in the very next year we in the House of Commons brought in a measure which provided that the whole of the changes affecting Supply and Ways and Means from year to year should be sent up to the Lords in one single measure, which we knew the Lords would not dare to throw out; and the consequence has been that from that time onwards the House of Lords has, I may say, never opened its mouth on the finance and taxation of the country." *

What Followed in 1861.

The economic results of the reform are, of course, unimpeachable. Like the glass duty, the brick duty, and the soap duty, the paper duty was a barbarous and mischievous impost. But the political and social effects of the repeal have been equally great. The wrath of the oligarchs was therefore intense when they discovered that the only effects of their resistance had been still further to reduce the power and popularity of the hereditary Chamber. Lord Robert Cecil's protest was almost passionate. He was "absolutely aghast" at the audacity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. "It has been the practice hitherto to divide all measures of finance into separate Bills, and to send them up separately to the House of Lords. But now, for a special political object, to avenge a special political defeat, to gratify a special pique, and to gain the doubtful votes of a special political section, it is proposed to vary the practice of half a century." It was a "lever to alter the Constitution." The speaker was confident that it would fail, and that the power of the House of Lords to check the infatuation of the House of Commons would be entirely unaltered.† But the protest did not prevent the passing of the Budget of 1861. ‡

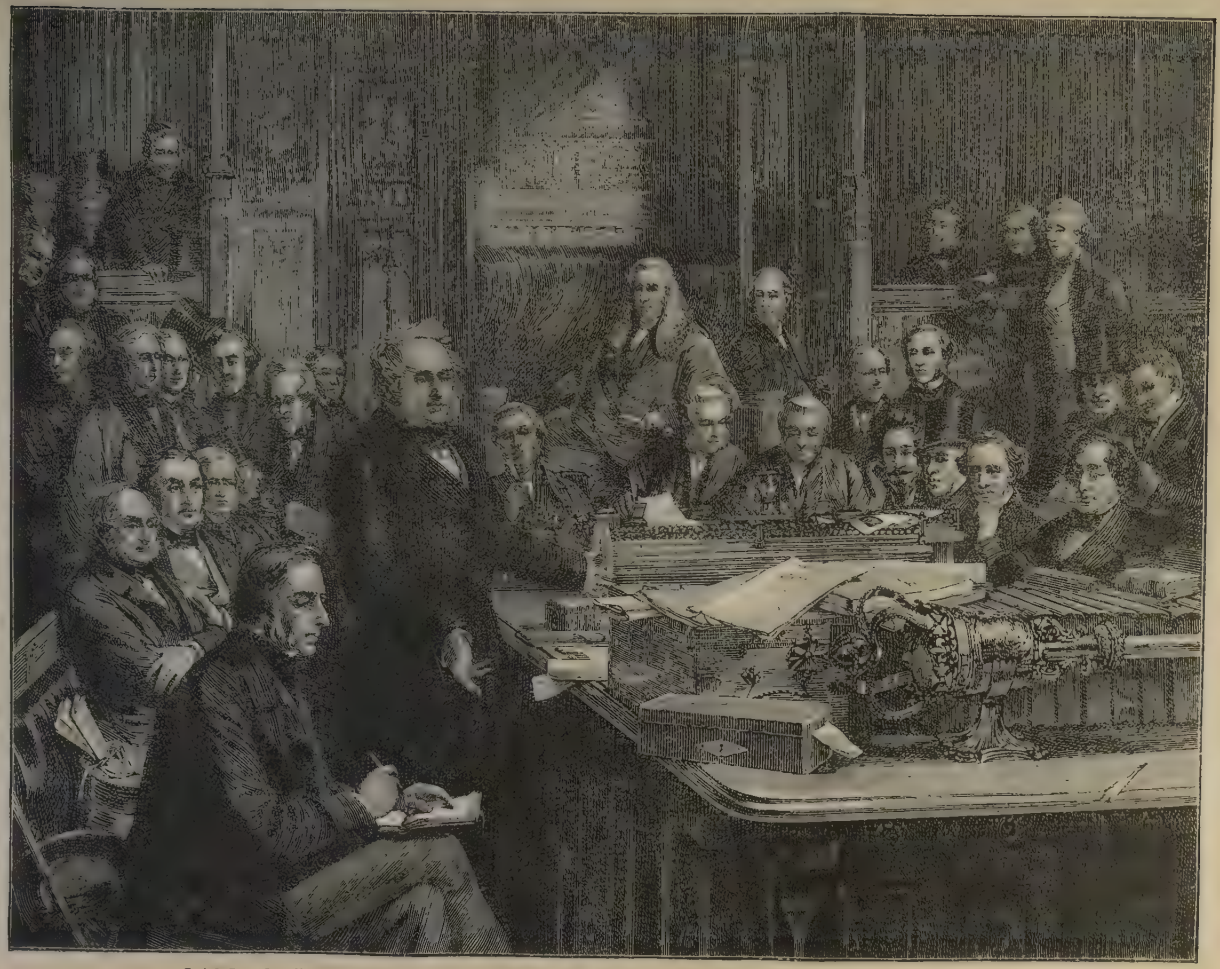
Lord Robert Cecil's Invective.

What critics have called Mr. Gladstone's great intellectual defect—his lack of a sense of proportion—is less noticeable in finance than in other departments of statesmanship. The very nature of the subject not only excuses but absolutely requires detail. It is not enough for a financier to sweep the horizon with a telescope, he should also take his microscope with him into the holes and corners. He ought to know everything about something, as well as something about everything. It was part of Mr. Gladstone's plan to answer large questions in miniature, to silence

* Speech at Penicuik, March 24th, 1880.

† Hansard, May 7th, 1867. In consequence of the obstruction of the minority, Mr. Gladstone moved to adjourn further progress of the order of the day, observing that this course would have the special advantage of allowing the noble lord the member for Stamford "time to reconsider the vocabulary in which he has addressed us."

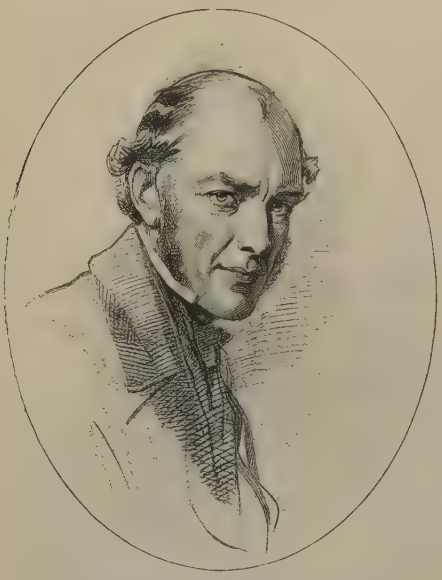
‡ The 1861 Budget provoked the remark that Mr. Gladstone had wrapped up a penny in paper. The repeal of the paper duty and a reduction of the income-tax by a penny formed two of its leading features.



LORD PALMERSTON ADDRESSING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN 1860.

*(From the Painting by J. Phillip, R.A.)*

classes by rebuking individuals, to advance a reform which he had at heart by encouraging a reformer with whom he was in sympathy. Thus, in the spring of 1860, when he was full of enthusiasm and optimism as to the effect which the cheapening of light French wines would have upon drunkenness, a Welsh parson wrote him a letter in which (after making an impudent demand that all clergymen who paid poor-rates should be exempted from the income-tax), he proceeded to chastise the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject of wine licences. In his reply (February 29th, 1860), which was published in the *Guardian*, Mr. Gladstone wrote:—



FREDERIC ROGERS (LORD BLACHFORD).
*(From a Drawing by Geo. Richmond, R.A.)*

"I am sorry it is your opinion that by giving wine licences to eating-houses and pastrycooks we shall increase the 'temptation to get drunk.' It is, on the contrary, our firm belief that if the House of Commons adopt our proposal it will be found eminently favourable to sobriety."

Mr. Gladstone's views upon the Temperance question were no doubt largely based upon his knowledge of Continental countries; and there can be no doubt that his advocacy of lighter and less intoxicating liquor, coupled with the financial encouragement afforded by the commercial treaty with France, has brought about a considerable change for the better in the public taste.*

In the very first year in which Mr. Gladstone held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer Frederic Rogers, than whom there was no more shrewd or competent observer of public men, wrote to Dean Church about the difficulties which would beset the new Minister:—

**An Analysis by Frederic Rogers.**

"He is really so powerful a man that whatever shakes and delays and loss of time there may be, he must come up near the surface. I expect he will show the best—*i.e.* most politically powerful—side of himself as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Pursuing details is so much his power, if only he is not run away with by it. I think, if it is not a paradox, he has not poetry enough for the formation of a first-rate judgment. He has an immense mass of knowledge most methodically arranged, but the separate items must be looked for in their respective boxes, and do not float about and combine. The consequence is not merely want of play, but that crotchety, one-sided, narrowish way of viewing a matter which people call ingenious, and subtle, and Gladstonian. He looks at the details, not the aspects of a subject, and masters it, I should imagine, by pursuing it hither and thither from one starting-point, not by walking round it. And financial subjects will, I suppose, bear this mode of treatment better than any other." †

* His enthusiasm for light wines for the public did not affect his individual preference for port.

† *Vide* Letters of Frederic, Lord Blachford. Edited by George Eden Marindin. P. 150.

Seven years later Bagehot wrote:—

"He lays down a principle of tremendous breadth to establish a detail of exceeding minuteness. . . . An incessant use of ingenious and unqualified principles is one of Mr. Gladstone's most prominent qualities; it is unfavourable to exact consistency of explicit assertion and to latent consistency of personal belief. His scholastic intellect makes matters worse. He will show that any two principles are or may be consistent; that if there is an apparent discrepancy, they may still, after the manner of Oxford, be 'held together.'"

Mr. Gladstone was constantly gathering useful information which served as a basis for new and illustration of old opinions. His mind was always at work either building or fortifying. The want of unity—which may easily be exaggerated—should be put down to the exigencies of Parliamentary debate and platform exposition. His mind was a perfect arsenal completely equipped for Parliamentary attack and defence. He was scarcely ever at fault for a fact or a figure, and he was perhaps the only great statesman of modern times who did not require the services of a private secretary at the House.

The rapidity with which he could conceive changes, and the sanguine temperament which so often led him to exaggerate their value, were only elements in this larger habit of absorption in details, or more correctly, of self-concentration upon the subject in hand. The power which such a faculty gives to a statesman cannot easily be exaggerated; but it had, of course, its drawback. Thus in the inexhaustible Budget of 1860, which reads like half a dozen rolled into one, one may easily find some material for criticism as well as much for admiration. Like its predecessor of 1853, it was a Budget of universal peace at a time when universal peace was highly improbable; and in the event the resuscitation of the Chinese War, which was unprovided for rather than unexpected, involved two appendices—a supplementary Budget in July, and an application for power to raise £2,000,000 by Exchequer bonds in August. Then there was the registration due of a penny upon imports and exports, from which Mr. Gladstone anticipated "a material improvement in the statistics of our internal trade."* The penny system of taxation which answered so well for receipts and cheques was to be applied to imports in the shape of a duty levied at the rate of one penny per package, and Mr. Gladstone calculated on its bringing in £300,000 a year. It only brought in £130,000—a very inadequate compensation for the waste of time and the obstruction to commerce involved in a petty tariff of units.† Some other small taxes on lading warrants and Customs revenue turned out to be equally unproductive and vexatious.

**Defects of the Budget of 1860.**

On March 7th, 1861, Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff records in his Diary, "A great speech of Gladstone's on Italy, which seemed to me at the time the best I had ever heard from him, except his Budget statement of 1860." It was a vigorous defence of Lord John Russell's Italian policy, a *national* policy in the highest sense of the word. Mr. Gladstone agreed with the opinion that the case of Naples was "that of a country where perjury

**A Great Speech on Italy.**

* Letters of Mr. Gladstone to G. C. Glyn, M.P., *Times*, February 17th, 1860.

† It did not answer expectations, and was repealed in 1863. *Cf. Times*, April 10th, 1861. Memorial presented to Chancellor of the Exchequer.

is the tradition of its kings." Two Tory members had come forward to speak for the infamies of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies and of the Papal States, and Mr. Gladstone followed them:—"I think I would rather live in a stout and well-built casemate, listening to the whizzing of bullets and the bursting of shells, than come before a free assemblage to vindicate such a cause as those hon. gentlemen have espoused." (Great cheering, which made the last words inaudible.) Then came a tremendous list of the black crimes and lawless murders of which these petty Governments had been guilty. But a greater power, Austria, was in the background, sheltering and supporting the criminals:—

"When I speak of Austria I draw a wide distinction between Austria in Italy and Austria beyond it. Beyond Italy I wish her well with all my heart, and regard her as the mainstay of the peace and order of Europe. But in Italy I hold it my bounden duty to say that it has been her unhappy and miserable task to be the instrument of carrying affliction to a people, not for her own benefit, but with the result of imperilling her existence as a State."

Mr. Gladstone concluded with a brief but moving peroration:—

"The miseries of Italy have been the dangers of Europe. The consolidation of Italy, her restoration to national life—if it be the will of God to grant her that boon—will be, I believe, a blessing as great to Europe as it is to all the people of the Peninsula."

The statesman with whom Mr. Gladstone was now co-operating on friendly and even affectionate terms soon ceased to be in any sense a rival. On July 24th, 1861, Mr. Gladstone wrote:—

"MY DEAR LORD J. RUSSELL,—I cannot despatch, as I have just done, the Chiltern Hundreds for you without expressing the strong feelings which even that formal act awakens. They are mixed as well as strong; for I hope you will be repaid in repose, health, and the power of long-continuing service for the heavy loss we suffer in the House of Commons.

"Although you may not hereafter have opportunities of adding to the personal debt I owe you, and of bringing it vividly before my mind by fresh acts of courage and kindness, I assure you the recollection of it is already indelible.—Believe me, most sincerely yours, W. E. GLADSTONE."*

On Lord John Russell's elevation to the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone came slowly to be recognised as the one great spokesman of advanced Liberalism on the Ministerial benches. Some others, and notably Villiers, who posed as Radicals, were secretly in full sympathy with Palmerston's reactionary or do-nothing policy.

The Budget of 1861 was simple enough. The Chancellor of the Exchequer estimated the revenue at £71,703,000, and the expenditure at £69,907,000. Some small impositions of taxes, such as the doubling of the chicory duty, increased the surplus by £100,000. The taxpayer was relieved by the abolition of the paper duty and the reduction of a penny in the income-tax.

The Budget of 1861.

Except on the articles actually affected by the operation of the Customs reforms of 1860, there had been no expansion of trade like that which had followed the operations of 1853. This comparative inelasticity made a deep impression upon Mr. Gladstone's mind; for it could only

*Walpole's Life of Lord John Russell, vol. ii., p. 337.

be accounted for in his opinion by the great increase of expenditure which had taken place in the interval :—

| | 1853-4. | 1860-1. | Increase. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Imperial expenditure .. | £51,250,000. | £72,792,000. | £21,542,000. |
| Local expenditure..... | £16,000,000. | £18,000,000. | £2,000,000. |
| Total..... | £67,250,000. | £90,792,000. | £23,542,000. |

The great problem of the income-tax depended upon the scale of expenditure, and Mr. Gladstone was evidently beginning to view that impost with greater and greater jealousy as an instrument which lent itself too readily to the prodigality of a Palmerstonian House of Commons and its prosperous, easy-going, ostentatious, middle-class constituents :— Dislike of the Income-tax.

"I cannot deny that remissions of direct taxation are as just and often as desirable [as remissions of indirect taxation]; and I as fully feel, as gentlemen opposite may feel, that our direct taxation has reached a point at which it is greatly to be wished that we should, if we can, begin at least to impart to it a downward movement.* I do not think that the condition of this country with regard to its finances can be wholly satisfactory when in time of peace the income-tax stands at 10d. in the £. I know very well that I am supposed to be under a special responsibility, not only for the amount, but for the existence of the income-tax. It has often been charged upon me, and I believe to this day alleged, that it is my absolute duty, whatever be the circumstances and whatever be the expenditure, to find the means of abolishing that tax, with or without a substitute. I must confess that I think that it is a hard imposition. I should like very much to be the man who could abolish the income-tax. I do not altogether abandon the hope that the time may come. . . . Upon all sudden attempts to reduce it, and upon all promises to make sudden, extensive, and sweeping reductions in it, I for one should look with great suspicion and disfavour. But, looking forward into the future, and desirous to afford such indications of it as I can venture to give, I should hazard an opinion that if the country is content to be governed at a cost of between £60,000,000 and £62,000,000, or even £64,000,000 a year, there is not any reason why it should not be so governed without the income-tax, providing that Parliament shall so will it to be. . . . I think that it would be a most enviable lot for any Chancellor of the Exchequer—I certainly do not entertain any hope that it will be mine -but I think that some better Chancellor of the Exchequer in some happier time may achieve that great consummation; and that some future poet may be able to sing of him, as Mr. Tennyson has sung of Godiva, although I do not suppose the means employed will be the same—

'He took away the tax
And built himself an everlasting name.'"

It is impossible to indicate, much less to quote, all the purple patches of these Budget statements. The variety of the topics dealt with is

* It may be convenient here to show what Mr. Gladstone did in this and the years immediately succeeding:—

1861-2. Income-tax reduced from 10d. to 9d.
1862-3. No change.
1863-4. Income-tax reduced from 9d. to 7d.
1864-5. ,, ,, ,, 7d. ,, 6d.
1865-6. ,, ,, ,, 6d. ,, 4d.

The expenditure, which had risen to £72,792,000 in 1860 61, had been reduced to £65,914,000 in 1865-66.

astounding, but not more so than the versatility with which the orator passes from grave to gay, from the scientific to the imaginative, from prose to poetry. The House of Commons was charmed and instructed by digressions on the relation of direct and indirect taxation,* the reciprocal action of Customs and Excise, the various influences of a bad harvest, the position and proper use of temporary revenues, the finance, history and literature of the Englishman's taste for heavy wines, the art of the exciseman, the mystery of drawbacks, the eternal struggle between Customs and consumption, the conflicting chronology of financial measures and fiscal receipts,† and the consequences of national prodigality.

**The American Civil War, 1862.**

The year 1862 opens a page of national distress and national error; and sympathy for the distress, as well as certain natural prejudices, led Mr. Gladstone and other statesmen of liberal tendencies to share instead of removing the error. The American Civil War had now lasted for nearly a year. At first English sympathies seemed to be upon the side of the North. But antipathy to slavery was not proof against the initial successes of the gentlemen Southerners. The battle of Bull's Run had taken place in the July of 1861, and the vigour and success of the Confederates in this and later engagements made up for the badness of their cause. Hopes began to be openly expressed in almost every newspaper and on almost every platform that the plucky Southerners would be able to make good their independence. The feeling that the North was unreasonable grew into conviction when the blockade of the Southern ports extended the miseries of war in an acute form to England. In his Budget speech of April 3, 1862, Mr. Gladstone speaks of "the deficient, the increasingly deficient supply of cotton," as a threatening and ominous circumstance. The cotton famine in Lancashire had destroyed his hopes of a surplus, and the only security for the Chancellor of the Exchequer lay in his utter destitution:—"If he does not possess a surplus you cannot take it from him, or according to an old proverb current in the northern part of this kingdom, which I will translate for fear of offending Scottish ears by a defective accent, 'It is difficult to deprive a Highlander of that particular garment which he does not wear.'"

**In the North.**

But Mr. Gladstone's feelings about the war, and, indeed, the general growth of his political opinions, are best exhibited in a series of remarkable public speeches which he delivered in this year, and by which he vastly increased his influence and popularity in the country generally, but more particularly in the North.

* "I can never think of direct or indirect taxation except as I should think of two attractive sisters, who have been introduced into the gay world of London; each with an ample fortune; both having the same parentage (for the parents of both I believe to be Necessity and Invention), differing only as sisters may differ, as where one is of lighter and another of darker complexion, or where there is some agreeable variety of manner, the one being more free and open, and the other somewhat more shy, retiring and insinuating. I cannot conceive any reason why there should be unfriendly rivalry between the admirers of these two damsels; and I frankly own, whether it be due to a lax sense of moral obligation or not, that as Chancellor of the Exchequer, if not as a member of this House, I have always thought it not only allowable but even an act of duty to pay my addresses to them both."

† Mr. Gladstone drew attention to an apparent loss of £300,000 in revenue owing to the loss of three days—the first through 1859-60 being a leap year, the second because the year 1860-1 began and ended on a Sunday, and the third because it included two Good Fridays.

On January 10th, 1862, the Chancellor of the Exchequer arrived in Edinburgh, and was entertained in the evening at the annual *symposium* of the University Professors. On the following day he laid the foundation-stone of an episcopal church at Leith, the birthplace of his father, Sir John Gladstone, whose munificence to his native town was still remembered with gratitude. After laying the stone* he was received by a crowded audience in the Assembly Rooms, Leith, where the provost presented him with a municipal address. In reply he spoke of his commercial origin and of the advantages of aristocratic birth. But when he remembered his father, "the active and successful merchant, distinguished by an energetic philanthropy," he could never desire to change him for the father of any other man. Turning to the great question of the day, the war between North and South, he urged that no unnecessary cause for irritation should be added to those which had already created great susceptibility in North America.

"I do not believe that at the time when the convulsion commenced there was one man in a thousand in this country who had any sentiment whatever towards the United States of America but that, so far as we had a selfish interest at all in the matter, our interest was that the American Union should continue undisturbed. Our forefathers have known the pangs of national dismemberment; and this gallant country, after a long struggle, has submitted to what it then regarded as a great calamity, but what we have since discovered to be, under the circumstances of the case, no calamity at all, but rather the accomplishment of a normal process of nature herself. Universal goodwill was the sentiment that prevailed towards America in this country; yet we could not help forming an opinion upon that terrific and frightful convulsion when it occurred. There is no doubt of the fact—I am not pretending to reveal secrets, or to be an interpreter of public opinion more than any other man—but there is no doubt, I think, of the fact that all the thinking men in this country did come to the conclusion that in that war which had commenced the party which was apparently the strongest had committed themselves to an enterprise which would probably prove to be completely beyond their powers."

As for the future—

"Let us hope that in whatever may arise or remain to be adjusted a spirit of brotherly concord may prevail; and together with a disposition to assert our rights, we may be permitted to cherish a disposition to interpret handsomely and liberally the acts and intentions of others, and to avoid, if we can, aggravating the frightful evils of the Civil War in America by perhaps even greater evils—at any rate, enormous evils—by what, though not a civil war, would be next to a civil war—any conflict between America and England." †

**Effects of the War.**

Looked at from a merely commercial standpoint, the Civil War in America had been disastrous. In the first three months of 1860 we had exported to America five millions' worth of British produce. The exports for the first three months of 1861 had shown a falling-off of more than three millions. But Mr. Gladstone could boast that he had called in the Old to redress the balance of the New World; for, thanks to the Commercial Treaty with France, our exports to that country in the three months of September, October, November, 1861, as compared with the same three months of 1860, had risen from £1,517,000

* Mr. Gladstone made a Demosthenic contrast between the meanness of the churches in which the rich were content to worship and the luxury which characterised every apartment of their private houses; but he was happy to think that in Scotland this reproach was least likely to arise.

† *Times*, January 13th, 1862.

to £3,617,000, showing a gross increase of more than two millions, "an augmentation in the total extent of the trade of more than cent. per cent."

On April 21st Mr. Gladstone paid a visit to Abney Hall, Cheadle, the residence of Sir James Watts. He was met at the Stockport station by a large deputation, and an address was presented to him by the Mayor of Stockport thanking him for his commercial legislation. On the following day Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, accompanied by Sir James and Lady Watts, visited Manchester, and went over various warehouses and factories, afterwards visiting the Exchange, where Mr. Gladstone made a short speech. The next day (Wednesday, April 23rd) found Mr. Gladstone at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, distributing the prizes which had been awarded as the result of an examination by the Association of Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Cheshire. The address which he delivered on this occasion deals mainly with the value of competition as a stimulus to education, but is chiefly memorable for one passage of exquisite pathos in which he couples the death of the Prince Consort and the famine in Lancashire:—

A Visit to Manchester, 1862.

"In times like these the human mind, and still more the human heart, searches all around for consolation and support. Of that support one kind is to be found in observing that trials the most severe and piercing are the lot not of one station only but of all. And perhaps in the wise counsels of Providence it was decreed that that crushing sorrow which came down as sudden as the hurricane, scarcely yet four months ago, upon the august head of our Sovereign, should serve, among other uses, that of teaching and helping her subjects to bear up under the sense of affliction and desolation, and should exhibit by conspicuous example the need and the duty both of mutual sympathy and mutual help. In many a humble cottage, darkened by the calamity of the past winter, the mourning inhabitants may have checked their own impatience by reflecting that, in the ancient Palace of our Kings, a woman's heart lay bleeding; and that to the supreme place in birth, in station, in splendour, and in power, was now added another and sadder title of pre-eminence in grief."

A meeting of the members of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce was held in the Town Hall on the Thursday, and an address of welcome presented to Mr. Gladstone. The address recalled his last visit, nine years earlier, and the work in which he had been then engaged. "The enlightened policy for which you then contended has stood the test of time, has developed an amount of commercial prosperity unparalleled in the annals of the world, and is now mitigating in a remarkable degree the distress consequent upon the sudden interruption of our intercourse with America." Mr. Gladstone's great speech on this occasion is well deserving of study by students of finance as well as by students of politics. He contrasted the public economy of the year 1853, when the country had an expenditure of fifty-one millions and a surplus of three and a half millions—"an honest, a sound, and a healthful state for the finances of this country"—with present conditions, when it was only with difficulty that revenue and expenditure could be balanced. "The utmost we can say to you is that we have not been drawn into that vortex into which almost every other nation has been dragged—we have not been begging for loans in the money market to carry on the Government in time of peace."

The greater part of the speech was devoted to a subtle analysis of the relations between America and England, and of the estrangement which had grown up from our lack of response to the demand made upon us by the public voice of the Northern States "for what is called sympathy." The demand amounted to this, "that we should take such a course by our language and by our public acts as would place the 6,000,000 or the 10,000,000 of men of the South in permanent hostility to us." True, we had strong

America and England.

MRS. GLADSTONE IN 1862.
*(After the Painting by William Say.)*

feelings against the Southern institution of slavery. "But that is no reason why, on the one side or the other, we should pursue a course of conduct that is to lay the foundation of alienation of feeling and permanent hostility between ourselves and those who may hereafter be a great nation claiming to enter into peaceful relations with us. . . . We have no faith in the propagation of free institutions at the point of the sword; it is not by such means that the ends of freedom are to be gained.

Freedom must be freely accepted, freely embraced. You cannot invade a nation in order to convert its institutions from bad ones into good ones." He argued that the secession of the South could not be prevented. "The position taken by the Northern States is this, 'We won't let you go,' while the position taken by the Southern States is, 'We are determined to go.' Well, gentlemen, you are men of business, and I ask you, if one of you has got a partner, and that partner wants to separate from you, whether in the long run it is not very difficult to hold him?"

The question was whether the heart of the South was set on separation. If it was, and "if the blood of Washington and of the men of Virginia of his day still runs in the veins of those who inhabit the Southern States, then it is almost impossible that the military object should be effected; and, even if it were, the civil and political difficulties remaining would render that military success itself a curse and a misery to those who had achieved it." England, however, might congratulate herself upon the neutrality she had observed, and upon the patience and endurance she had shown under the miseries inflicted by this municipal and civil struggle; and she might find some compensation for the stoppage of American trade in the expansion of her trade with France.*

In this speech, which ended his engagements in Lancashire, Mr. Gladstone had dealt with the difficult problem of the relations between the English Government and the two contending parties in America with admirable tact and delicacy. But in the autumn, at the commencement of the Parliamentary recess, his sympathies got the better of his discretion. He had accepted quite a number of invitations from towns in Northumberland and Durham. His first visit

**At Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1862.**

was to Newcastle, where he stayed with Mr. William Hutt, then a Member of Parliament. Mrs. Gladstone was with him. In the evening of October 7th, about 500 guests sat down to dinner in the Newcastle Town Hall. Mr. Gladstone enlarged upon the result of the commercial treaty with France. In the last year before the treaty our trade with France had been worth £9,400,000; in the first year after the treaty it had been worth £21,000,000; and the total value of English manufactured goods exported to France had risen from £2,451,000 to £6,700,000—an increase of 270 per cent.

Mr. Gladstone then turned to the cotton famine in Lancashire, and made some very remarkable observations:—

"Let us hope in the first place that in the administration of the Poor Law it may be remembered that the right of these people is to a sufficiency of food for the purpose of sustaining not life only, but health. Before you talk of relief committees and of private charities, remember that that is the sacred right of the people—a lien constituted by law upon the property which is liable for the purpose of supporting them; and let us hope also that the relief which is given them, not under circumstances importing reproach to their character, but under circumstances which illustrate beyond all example the strength and firmness and

**The Cotton Famine.**

* In the improvement of trade due to the commercial treaty of 1860, he saw the germ of a firmer friendship between the two Western Powers, which would gradually come about as Frenchmen and Englishmen came to know each other better. The increase of commercial transactions had already brought with it a practical corollary:—"Whereas before the treaty the letters between this country and France increased at the rate of about 4 per cent. per annum, the immediate effect of the treaty was that they increased by 20 per cent."

tenacity of the noble English spirit which is in them—let us hope, I say, that that relief, when it is given, will be given without humiliating them or making them feel that they have lost ground in the estimation of their fellow-countrymen on account of misfortunes, of which they are as innocent as children, but which they have borne like heroes."

But Mr. Gladstone did not stop there. He went out of his way to attack some of the mill-owners:—

"I am afraid that there are in that class, as in other classes, men insensible to their duty—men so deluded as to make money the object of their worship, instead of using it as an instrument of good. I have heard of such transactions as a mill shut up, and a large stock of cotton which was in the possession of the owner, sold by him and sent away by night to avoid public indignation. The man who has done so, if indeed it has been done, has used the rights of property. Yes; but when some great landowner, some nobleman who owns almost an entire county, says that nobody shall go across that district, or forbids the building upon his estates of a chapel where people may worship God according to their conscience, public indignation is loud against him, because he has used the rights of property, indeed, but has used them in a way which involves moral guilt and threatens danger, if the example were extensively followed, even to the rights of property themselves. And so there may be those among the owners of mills and factories—I trust they are rare exceptions—who are insensible to the solemn and sacred claims of their noble work-people, and who are using the rights of property in a manner which, if extensively pursued, would bring all property to destruction."

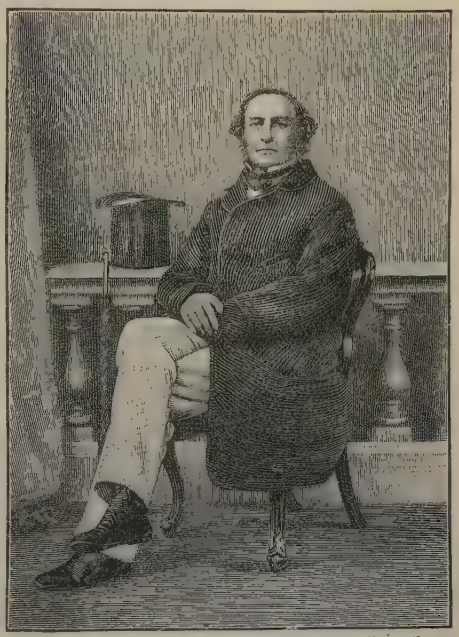


*Photo: Downey, Newcastle.*

PORTRAIT OF MR. GLADSTONE TAKEN WHEN AT NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE IN 1862.

Mr. Gladstone's sympathies surely led him into excessive and impolitic indignation. The falling off in the shipments of American cotton had made full employment of the industrial population in Lancashire a physical impossibility. Under these circumstances was it the duty of a mill-owner to keep his mill open, irrespective of profit and loss, until every bale was exhausted? Was there any material difference between the case of a manufacturer who sold his stock of cotton and that of his rival who had no cotton and refused to buy it? Indeed, in another part of his speech Mr. Gladstone seems to have seen that his resentment required modification:—

"Under the pressure caused by the price of cotton, which is now quadrupled, and which is not met by a corresponding increase in the value of goods, one-half of the owners of mills and factories (speaking roughly) are keeping open their works. Of the other half we should recollect that in every large body of men engaged in commerce there must be a proportion of such as are needy, and therefore it is fair to assume that if those who have closed their mills appear not to have contributed so largely to the

relief of distress as might have been expected, a portion of them have probably been precluded from doing so by actual inability and the pressure of hard times upon their comparatively narrow resources."

Turning from the sufferings of Lancashire to the struggle which was causing them, Mr. Gladstone pleaded for a neutral attitude and a kindly temper. Englishmen ought not to reciprocate the irritation which the Northern States felt at the dismemberment of the Union, and expressed at times in their diplomacy. Calmness was the more necessary, because they were all agreed as to what must be the result :—

"We know quite well that the people of the Northern States have not yet drunk of the cup—they are still trying to hold it far from their lips—which all the rest of the world see they nevertheless must drink of. We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either, they have made a nation."

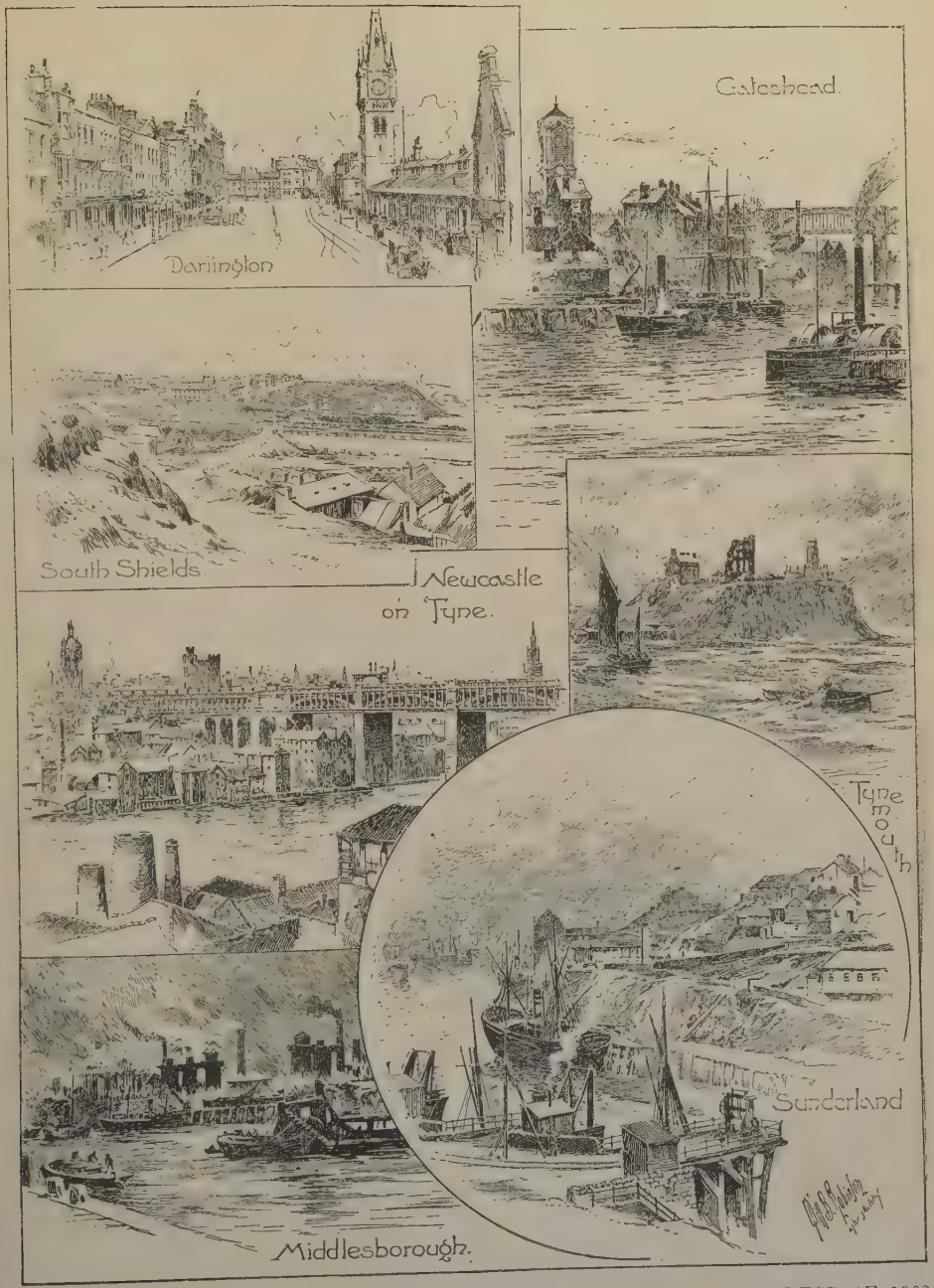
This declaration caused a great sensation at the time and called forth a vigorous protest from the American ambassador in London.*

With a subtlety that may be thought far-fetched, Mr. Gladstone also argued that it was to the interest of the negro race that they should have to do with their own masters alone rather than with their masters backed by the whole power of the Federal Government of the United States. As to the interests of England, "I for one, exercising my own poor faculties as I best could, have never felt that England had any reason connected with her own special interests for desiring the disruption of the American Union;" but he could understand those who said "that it is for the general interest of nations that no State should swell to the dimensions of a continent."

Mr. Gladstone's position in relation to the American Civil War was a natural outcome of his general political philosophy, as Sir Walter Phillimore has pointed out in the course of a very suggestive criticism :—

"It has been customary to condemn, or to defend so weakly as to condemn, Mr. Gladstone's position with respect to the secession of the Southern States. I am glad of this opportunity to take, in behalf of him and of the little knot of men who thought with him, a higher ground. They were not moved by any tolerant feeling towards slavery, by any sympathy for the Southern planter as a fellow aristocrat, or by any mean jealousy of the growing greatness of the United States. Their position was perhaps a narrow one; historic, it may be said academic, but perfectly creditable. As disciples of Burke they had admitted the justice of the claim of the States to self-government and independence, if that were necessary to self-government, and the wrong done by England in attempting to coerce them in the eighteenth century. On the same ground they admitted the claim of the Southern States to secede from a secession. It

* On October 23rd, Mr. Adams (the American ambassador) had an interview with Earl Russell on the subject of Mr. Gladstone's speech at Liverpool, in which he was "obliged to confess," so he wrote to Mr. Seward in his report, "that I had lately been called somewhat suddenly to the consideration of the condition of my travelling equipage. . . . . His lordship took my allusion at once, though not without a slight indication of embarrassment. . . . His lordship intimated as guardedly as possible that Lord Palmerston and other members of the Government regretted the speech, and that Mr. Gladstone himself was not disinclined to correct as far as possible the misinterpretation which had been made of it.




PLACES VISITED BY MR. GLADSTONE IN HIS TRIUMPHAL PROGRESS OF 1862.

was, in fact, the doctrine of Home Rule; and it will probably be found that the majority of the survivors of that little band became Home Rulers." *

On the following day (Wednesday, October 8th) Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone sailed down the Tyne from Gateshead to Tynemouth. It was quite a triumphal progress. Bells were rung, the ships were decorated with bunting, the Volunteers turned out. Before embarkation the Mayor and Corporation of Gateshead came in procession to a platform specially prepared, and presented an address. This done, a grand procession of steamers and barges, to the accompaniment of bands and salvoes of artillery, made its way nine or ten miles between banks studded with coal-staiths, wharves, ship-building yards, and smoky factories. On reaching the mouth of the Tyne the party landed first at the north pier, where an address was presented by the Tynemouth Corporation, then at the south pier, where the South Shields Corporation followed suit. By the time that the fleet returned to Newcastle Mr. Gladstone had made four speeches. Next day the party started early, reached Sunderland at ten o'clock in the morning, and visited the town and docks, Mr. Gladstone receiving and replying to an address at the Athenæum. At one o'clock they left for Darlington. There they were met by the Mayor and some leading ironmasters, who escorted them in a special train to Eston Junction. From Eston, where they went over some ironworks, they proceeded to the River Tees, where a steamer was waiting to convey them to Middlesbrough; and another river procession ensued, formed by the craft of Stockton and Middlesbrough.

A Triumphal Progress, 1862.

On reaching Middlesbrough the party went direct to the Town Hall, where the town clerk read a magniloquent address about the cries of Neapolitan dungeons, the cement of commercial treaties, and the triumphs of academic learning. Mr. Gladstone, in reply, claimed the "credit or the discredit" of having "promoted revolution in Southern Italy." So long was the speech that the Mayor began to tug at the coat-tails of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and implore him to sit down. He thought Mr. Gladstone had only one speech and that that ought to be reserved for the banquet in the evening! The worthy fellow was astonished as well as delighted when he found that the quantity of the after-dinner speech was undiminished by the speech of the afternoon. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was indeed full of life and humour and good-humour. It was obvious that he was stimulated by the contrast between the intellectual lethargy of Oxford and the commercial enterprise of the North. He felt (as he said) that "as we move towards the North, while the outer air cools, there is a warmer glow within." He described Middlesbrough as "an infant Hercules." Even "the Town Hall in which we are met is inadequate to the wants of the inhabitants, just as we see sometimes a fine, full-grown boy with his trousers a little short."

The *Times* was surprised that a Chancellor of the Exchequer should condescend to visit so insignificant a place. Mr. Gladstone's perception of industrial development was more acute; and marvellous was the foresight exhibited in some of his remarks and comments. He noticed the great advantage which had just accrued to England through the substitution of iron for wood in shipbuilding:—

* *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1898.

"The strength of the people of this island, their vigorous and masculine habits, have at all events given them an immense advantage in the prosecution of the trade in metals, and whatever tends to substitute metallic productions for productions not metallic in such an article as ships is a change and a progress eminently favourable to England."

He drew a quaint comparison with the year 1725, when coal came from Suffolk and when in the near neighbourhood of London "a devout lady made her journey to church upon a Sunday in her carriage drawn by six oxen," explaining that "the whole strength of six oxen was required to contend, not with the weight of this good lady, but with the condition of the roads and communications as they then were in the wealthiest and most highly-developed portions of the country."

After these arduous exertions Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone rested for two days as guests of Lord Zetland at his seat of Aske Hall, near Middlesbrough. It had been a great triumph—a peaceful recognition by a thriving industrial population of the benefits conferred upon them by the legislator and administrator of Free Trade. On Saturday, the 11th of October, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone left for York, where, after a visit to the Minster, they were entertained at a luncheon given in the Mansion House. In "the repose of York," Mr. Gladstone philosophised on the vigour of the districts of the Tyne, the Wear, and the Tees, and confessed that the men of Lancashire had more formidable rivals than he had hitherto been aware of. The struggle in America he regarded as a grave blow to the cause of freedom, though he had always felt "that there was something in the freedom of America not quite of the genuine ancestral staple of the freedom of England." Nevertheless he would not refuse praise to institutions "to which the immortal Washington gave his sanction."

The general monotony of the year 1863, black enough for the historians of Poland and Ireland, is diversified for the biographer of Mr. Gladstone by a small but instructive failure, which resulted from a proposal very just, very courageous, and very impolitic. **The Budget of 1863.** With a surplus of more than three and a half millions, Mr. Gladstone proposed to reduce the income-tax from 9d. to 7d., and the tea duty from 1s. 5d. to 1s.; and on the 23rd of April these simple resolutions were passed without serious opposition. So far even his most critical critic was favourable. "This session, by condescending to be commonplace, he has provoked no jealousy and disarmed opposition."* But there were some minor provisions which exhibited an "uneasy industry in making experiments." There was actually a recommendation to an assembly of the most clubbable men in the world that a sum of £17 1s. should be taken from every club for a licence to sell beer and spirits to its members. For the sake of a few hundred pounds of revenue the clubs were to be assimilated to public-houses, and gentlemen, like ordinary people, were to be taxed for drinking. This unpopular, or rather unparliamentary, proposal was dropped. **A Proposal to License Clubs.**

But there was another and more serious item in the Budget. An end was to be put to the exemption hitherto granted to charities under the Income Tax Acts. When it became obvious that a serious blow would be levelled at comfortable dinners and social functions and pleasant

* *Times*, April 28th, 1863.

privileges and family patronage, a great outcry was raised. Virtuous and aristocratic indignation swelled and swelled until at last it burst upon the devoted head of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a deputation headed by a Royal Duke, an Archbishop, many peers, temporal and spiritual, and other ornaments of society.

An Attempt to Tax Charities.

Mr. Gladstone, however, was convinced, not that he was wrong, but that he was unappreciated and misunderstood; and that same night he determined to persuade the House :—

"One of the great evils of the present system with respect to charities is, that while we bestow public money on these establishments, we dispense with all public control over them; and we thus annul all effective motives for economical management. Endowed institutions laugh at public opinion. There is no public opinion brought to bear upon them. The Press knows nothing of their expenditure. Parliament knows nothing of it. It is too much to suppose that hospitals are managed by angels and archangels, and that their governors do not, like the rest of humanity, stand in need of supervision, criticism, and occasional rebuke. I do not speak of malversation and corruption. I speak of the innumerable shades which separate good and thrifty from bad and wasteful management. Therefore, even in the case of St. Bartholomew's, I object to an exemption which by its very nature at once removes the principal motives for economical management. When the managers tell me that the exaction of £850 will compel them to dismiss 500 patients, I am entitled to ask: Why then do you expend £220 in a feast? Your 'cases' of patients are estimated to cost some thirty shillings each; what right have you to eat up in an hour 150 beds?"

Mr. Gladstone proceeded throughout on the assumption that a State exemption is equivalent to a State donation, and that charities controlled by private corporations are not proper objects for contributions from the taxes. He always held that what a man can afford to give in charity, he ought to give during his lifetime. "What a man gives on his death-bed is not charity in a high sense . . . it is not wise for the State to encourage death-bed bequests." *

At the close of the debate, Mr. Gladstone, seeing that the House was against him, and knowing that most of his colleagues were lukewarm or hostile, withdrew his proposal. But though the proposal was withdrawn, the speech was not wasted. A notice had gone out that institutions which would not reform themselves would soon be reformed in spite of themselves.

Beaten on clubs and charities, Mr. Gladstone again courted defeat on an abstract resolution proposed by a Mr. Sheridan against the Fire Insurance Duty. Whether it was mainly a duty on prudence or on property, there is no doubt that it was unnecessary, odious, and unpopular. Mr. Gladstone did not really defend the duty on its merits. He tried to prevail upon the House to reject the resolution on technical grounds :—

The Fire Insurance Duty.

"I want to know whether this is a proper course for the House to take. . . . Is it right to pronounce an abstract opinion, written in the air as it were, on the merits or demerits of a particular duty, without taking any step to remove it? I protest against any such step, and I say it is in direct contradiction to every true conception of the duties of this House." †

* *Cf.* Hansard, May 4th, 1863, and for a corrected version—many of the corrections and additions are curious and interesting—"Gladstone's Financial Statements," pp. 426-462.

† Hansard, July 14th, 1863. The abstract resolution was carried by 103 to 67; and within two years the duty was abolished! In the following year, Mr. Gladstone became involved

At one point, the unfortunate Sheridan rose to explain. Mr. Gladstone refused to give way:—"The hon. gentleman has got his speech and his reply, and I think he may dispense with incessant speeches in the middle of my remarks."

If the speech on charities shows Mr. Gladstone *fortiter in re* the speech on the Fire Insurance Duty does *not* show him *suaviter in modo*. In fact, he still had plenty to learn from Lord Palmerston in the art of managing the House of Commons.

Outside Parliament he was not particularly active. A lecture in aid of the Hawarden village literary institution, in January, another at Burslem on Wedgwood and pottery,* and an after-dinner speech at Halesowen, in Worcestershire,† almost exhaust his provincial activities during the year.

In November he was the recipient of a letter from the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam—a terrible description of the social and economic miseries of Ireland, which were already leading to wholesale emigration. The archbishop spoke of "the grinding machinery of tenantry at will and perpetual notices to quit, and the annual raising of rents, and the ejectment of the tenants, and the demolition of their houses." The landlords, indeed, had taken alarm at the wholesale flight of their tenantry; but there was as yet no indication on the part of the Government that they would connect the interests of the landlord and tenant by giving a certain, profitable and secure tenure of house or farm. "Nor is there, finally, any hope held forth that those detested prisons, the workhouses, shall be abolished. . . . Nor is the axe yet laid to the root of that hideous evil, the Protestant Church Establishment, so long acknowledged, deplored, and stigmatised as the standing scandal of our land and the shame of its Government." ‡

An Appeal from Ireland.

On January 4th, 1864, Mr. Gladstone opened a reading-room for working men in Buckley, near Hawarden, and discoursed on the thriftlessness of the English as compared with the Scotch, Welsh, and French; and also explained at great length the advantages of Savings Banks, making fun of a not altogether unnatural notion which had somehow got about that the Government was opening Savings Banks in order to discover how much more taxation the people could bear.

In Praise of Thrift, 1864.

In the *Times* of April 2nd, 1864, will be found an interesting correspondence

in a personal dispute with Mr. Sheridan, whose name had been connected with a company that had come to grief. Ultimately he withdrew his censure "so far as Mr. Sheridan was not connected with the company." Mr. Gladstone's speech (Hansard, March 18th, 1864) was a masterpiece in the art of logical distinctions. The final equilibrium was attained in a letter to the *Times*, March 21st, 1864.

* On October 26th, when Mr. Gladstone, accompanied by Mrs. Gladstone, Miss Gladstone and Sir Stephen Glynne, laid the foundation-stone of the Wedgwood Institute.

† At a banquet given to the eldest son of the Hon. G. C. Lyttelton on October 29th. Mr. Gladstone spoke of the lethargy of the public mind, which was mirrored in Parliament; and divided politicians into two classes, those who say "let well alone" and those who say "move on." He identified himself with the latter.

‡ Dated St. Jarlath's, Tuam, November 16th. The fact that the letter is addressed to Mr. Gladstone proves that the eyes of reformers were beginning to turn to him.

between Mr. Gladstone and a Bath clergyman who ran a friendly society "for a hobby," and wished to know whether it would be annihilated by the Government Annuities Bill. Mr. Gladstone, in reply, writing from 11, Carlton House Terrace on April 1st, said that experience must answer the question; but he specified three dangers to small self-governing assurance societies:—

Friendly Societies.

"Friendly societies will be in danger when, with the idea and theory of self-government, they allow their affairs to be in the hands of managers at a distance, whom the members can no more control than the electoral body of the country could, without the House of Commons, control the Queen's Government. They will be in danger when their rules and tables have not been beyond all doubt ascertained by competent and instructed authority to be not merely legal but wise and prudent. Lastly, I fear they will very often be in danger when they transact their business at the public-house."

On the 3rd of April Garibaldi landed at Southampton. His popularity was enormous, and proved a little embarrassing to the Government. Mr. Gladstone refused to be orthodox, and gave a hearty welcome to the great man. Garibaldi stayed for a few days at Cliefden Park, the residence of the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland. It is said that when the Palmerston Cabinet, alarmed at the susceptibilities of foreign Governments, was deliberating how best to hasten his departure, one Minister suggested that they might render the republican harmless by marrying him to the Duchess of Sutherland. Another, better informed, objected that Garibaldi was already provided with a wife. "That does not matter," said Palmerston, "we can put up Gladstone to explain her away."

Garibaldi and Gladstone.

Mr. Gladstone made his financial statement on April 7th. He proposed to devote rather more than half of his surplus of two and a half millions to a reduction of the sugar duties, and at the same time to take another penny off the income-tax, which was thus reduced to 6d. In his speech Mr. Gladstone subjects the income-tax to another searching analysis. In favour of its retention as a permanent source of ordinary revenue, it might be urged that its efficacy was enormous. "I do not know any tax by which in the same degree as by the income-tax you would be able to get at the vast reserved incomes of the country." On the other hand, there was to be considered the evil of inquisition into private affairs, the hardship with which the tax pressed on the lower classes of incomes, and last, but not least, its operation upon public economy. It is "most questionable," he declared emphatically, whether a return to "reasonable thrift" can be accomplished "compatibly with the affirmation of the principle that the income-tax is to be made a permanent portion of the fiscal system of this country."

The Budget of 1864.

The Income Tax Again.

On May 11th a great sensation was caused by Mr. Gladstone's speech on Baines's Borough Franchise Bill. He first examined the charges which were made against the working classes:—

Working Men and the Franchise, 1864.

"We are told that the working classes are given to the practice of strikes. I believe it is the experience of the employers of labour that these strikes are more and more losing the character of violence and compulsory interference with the free will of their own comrades and fellow workmen, and are assuming that legal and, under certain circumstances, legitimate character which they possess, as

the only means by which, in the last resort, labour can fairly assert itself against capital in the friendly strife of the labour market."

This led to the famous declaration: "I contend that it is on those who say it is necessary to exclude forty-nine fiftieths [of the working classes] that the burden of proof rests. . . . Every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution."

Mr. Gladstone was thought to have declared himself in favour of universal manhood suffrage. "Surely," said the *Times*—

"this is the language of sweeping and levelling Democracy, of men who have emancipated themselves from the right divine of Kings in order to fall into the equally dangerous fallacy of the right divine of multitudes. . . . It is Equality against Liberty, Theory against Practice, abstract dogmatism against experience, a confusion between the end and the means." *

The *Daily News* said:—

"The fall of a Ministry could hardly have caused more stir than Mr. Gladstone's speech yesterday afternoon on Mr. Baines's Borough Franchise Bill. . . . He has unfurled and raised aloft what Tories on both sides of the House call 'the standard of domestic revolution,' but which the public will recognise as the long-lost flag of the Liberal party. It was with nothing less than consternation that the majority of the House heard the statesman whose character, abilities, and political rank mark him out as its future leader proclaim," etc. etc.

ROBERTSON GLADSTONE.

*(From a Drawing at Hawarden Castle.)*

The *Morning Star* said that he would be henceforth "not only the most distinguished orator in the House of Commons, but also the most popular of all Englishmen. . . . He is the representative of the unrepresented."

To the argument that since there was no agitation nothing need be done, Mr. Gladstone replied:—

"When a working man finds himself in such a condition that he must abandon that daily labour on which he is strictly dependent for his daily bread, then it is that he gives up the profitable application of his time; in railway language 'the danger signal is turned on'; for he does it because he feels a strong necessity for action, and a distrust in the rulers who, he thinks, have driven him to that necessity."

In short, absence of agitation was no reason why Parliament should be indisposed to discuss or legislate upon a question.

At the end of the month Mr. Gladstone published his speech with a

* *Times*, May 12th. And on the following day: "At a tap from Mr. Gladstone's wand we awake to a very different scene. We have got equality instead of liberty."

very curious preface, which was taken in some quarters as amounting to a recantation. He said that the speech was not "a deliberate and studied announcement," but that the views contained were a "practical revival of a strain which, five years ago, was usual and familiar; which had then derived abundant countenance from the very highest organs of political articulation, and which now only sounds strange because within that period it has fallen into desuetude."

An Explanation.

Briefly, according to this preface, the expression of opinion in his speech amounted to this: that exclusion from the franchise should be based on two grounds only:—(1) Unfitness due to want of intelligence and integrity; (2) Unfitness due to political danger which might arise from admission, "as for example, through the disturbance of the equilibrium of the constituent body, or through virtual monopoly of power in a single class." Mr. Gladstone aimed at retrieving past arrears rather than solving future problems. But, though the explanation might serve to lull the anxieties of the Palmerstonians and of the "historical" Liberals who were vegetating on their past, there could be no doubt as to what had happened. Gladstone had been converted by Bright as Peel had been converted by Cobden.

After such a performance in Parliament, great interest was naturally felt in a series of speeches which Mr. Gladstone delivered in South Lancashire in October. Arriving at Bolton from Scotland on the 11th, he addressed a meeting there in the afternoon. He stayed the night with his brother, Mr. Robertson Gladstone, at Court Hey, and on the following day opened a park at Farnworth. He spoke of town life and the need for recreation and landscape, asserted that the relation between employers and employed ought to be human, "not the mere settling of the cash account," and ridiculed the old idea that loyalty and the factory system were incompatible. He had something to say also about property:—

Speeches in Lancashire, 1864.

"I think, ladies and gentlemen, that it is about thirty years since a gentleman of high character and great ability, employed in the public service in Ireland, created very considerable alarm and apprehension by putting forth in a concise and telling form what was thought the somewhat revolutionary doctrine that 'property has its duties as well as its rights.' The doctrine was received by many for the moment as revolutionary, as if it were some monstrous conception aiming at the breaking up of society; but that dreaded monster, if such it was, has now become a domesticated idea. It has entered with us into every house, and it lies as quietly by our firesides as if it were the favourite dog or cat of the family."

The Duties of Property.

The same night, at a banquet given by the Mayor of Liverpool in the Town Hall, he made a speech of such importance that a summary of it was transmitted "by electric and magnetic telegraph" to the London papers, and appeared on London breakfast tables on the following morning. Mr. Gladstone devoted himself to a defence of his Budget against the Financial Reform Association, which objected to the lowering of the income-tax. As to financial reform generally he said:—

"Direct taxation, I admit, if we were to proceed upon abstract principles, is a sound principle. But, gentlemen, have some compassion upon those whose first necessity,

MANCHESTER FROM KERSAL MOOR IN THE 'SIXTIES.

*(From the Picture by W. Wyld in the Royal Collection.)*

whose first duty, is to provide for the maintenance of public credit—to provide for the defences of the country—to provide in every department for the full efficiency of the public service. I wish I could teach every political philosopher and every financial reformer to extend some indulgence to those who would ascend along with them, if they could, into the seventh heaven of speculation, but who have weights and clogs tied to their feet, which bind them down to earth and render it necessary for them to infuse large dilution, large participation of secondary matter, into that system of abstract reasoning by which, if they could, they would be very glad to be guided."

Mr. Gladstone spoke of the responsibilities of extended empire, and pointed out that the price we paid was vulnerability in every part of the world; and that in the unequal association between ourselves and our Colonies, while we protected them with our army and navy, they, contributing nothing, were beginning to "protect" themselves against our manufactures. At Manchester, on the following day (Oct. 13th), Mr. Gladstone contrasted the efficiency of the free and voluntary agency employed in dealing with the Lancashire cotton famine with the results, in many respects lamentable, of the Government machinery which had been set to work to cope with the Irish famine. As to the imperial loan which he had sanctioned:—

"In my official capacity, when a demand is made for a public grant or even for a public loan, my first impulse is to receive it with a moderate but still sensible degree of jealousy and aversion; but I can confidentially assure you that I never had the slightest sentiment of that kind in regard to the application from Lancashire. There were some, but they were Southerners and knew no better, who believed the loan was only a grant in disguise, and that when the time came there would be found to be much difficulty as to the repayment. I for one was convinced from the first that the advances to Lancashire would be regarded with the same exact fidelity as anyone among you would show in meeting a bill drawn upon you for value received."

Mr. Gladstone then touched upon the cession of the Ionian Islands, which had been brought about on his own initiative in the previous year:—

**Cession of the Ionian Islands.**

"I look with great satisfaction on that measure, because it shows that the people of England are rising far above the region of the prejudices by which their judgment would formerly have been obscured. Some years back we should have had all sorts of bugbears sent forth into the world, and attempts would have been made to persuade the people that Corfu was the gate of the Adriatic; that the Adriatic was a part of the Mediterranean; that the Mediterranean involved the Empire of the Seas; and that the cession of the Ionian Islands would be the downfall of England. I do believe there are persons who conscientiously entertain a view of things not very different from that; but they have found themselves in a minority so decided that their voices have never risen beyond a political whisper. Mr. Mayor and gentlemen, in the cession of the Ionian Islands a marked homage has been paid to principles of justice; and we, who have gone about preaching to others that they ought to have regard to national rights, feelings, and traditions, have, by the cession of the protectorate of the Ionian Islands, shown that we are ready to apply in our own case the rules and maxims which we advised them to apply in theirs."

Mr. Gladstone eulogised the English Press, and took some credit to himself for the repeal of the paper duty. He quoted Sir Robert Peel's opinion that the Letters of Junius were not so well written as the *Times;* and then proceeded to distinguish between the influence exerted by the Press in domestic and in foreign affairs. In the first region he held "that the working of the Press is on the whole nearly perfect." But—

**On the Press.**

"with respect to foreign policy you cannot have so unmixed a result or such unmixed good, because when strong national sentiment arises with regard to some question of foreign policy, then the tide in this country flows one way in a degree which is rarely the case with respect to domestic questions, and there is undoubtedly a grave risk that the Press, partaking of the national sympathies, will lose a great part of its utility as a corrector of error, and inflame the very prejudices which it is desirable to correct and remove."

Events have added irony to what was at the time an almost pathetic reference to the thirty-two years of public service after which "one begins to think of a future to be passed otherwise than in the exciting scenes of political conflict." With the exception of Cardwell, most of "the friends of the late Sir Robert Peel" had now passed away. Not so the necessity for reform; changes were still needed both in representation and administration. And as for finance—

"If I refer to my own department I look upon that as one in which the business of Reform can never be brought to its termination, because you know very well that where there is money there is temptation. There is temptation in the administration of public money; the principle of decay and corruption is continually at work."

**Tempting the Chancellor of the Exchequer.**

The temptation came upon Mr. Gladstone himself in a very amusing form on the occasion of his visit to Manchester, as will appear from the following extract from a provincial journal:—

"A project for the formation of a photographic gallery or museum has been before the public on several occasions, and has been mentioned in the Manchester City Council more than once. Mr. Gladstone on Friday gave his assistance towards carrying out this scheme. Upon his arrival with Mrs. Gladstone at the Victoria Station in the morning he was received by the Mayor and the Town Clerk, and they were immediately driven in the Mayor's carriage to Mr. M'Lachlan's gallery, Stamp Office Buildings. Mr. Gladstone was soon placed in a position to admit of a characteristic portrait being taken [!], but Mr. M'Lachlan experienced a difficulty in determining upon what object to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to fix his attention. In the emergency he put his hand into his waistcoat pocket, drew out a sovereign, balanced it adroitly on the back of a chair, and asked Mr. Gladstone to look intently at the coin. The object was defeated by the spontaneous laughter that the act produced. Mr. Gladstone remarked that Mr. M'Lachlan had selected the best possible thing for him to look at—it was quite a bait. Mrs. Gladstone said Mr. M'Lachlan had shown that he possessed a deep knowledge of human nature."

Eventually two or three successful "negative portraits" of Mr. Gladstone were taken.* Thirty years later Mr. Gladstone's patience was exhausted. "I am very savage about photographers"—so he wrote to Mr. John Temple Leader, the last surviving member of the "Weg"—"who, with autographers, are prime plagues of my life; they usually offer any number of copies as bait."

On November 8th, 1864, Sir Roundell Palmer presided at a dinner given by the English Bar to M. Berryer. Mr. Gladstone was present, and spoke with perhaps unwonted appreciation of lawyers and the law:—

**A Eulogy of Law and Lawyers, 1864.**

"I have always felt that the Bar is inseparable from our national life, from the security of our national institutions; but never, so long as I looked at England alone, did I understand the full extent of its value. Some years ago it was my lot to be a witness of cruel persecution in a country in the South of Europe. There the executive power did not merely break the law, but deliberately supplanted it and set it aside, and established in its stead a system of pure arbitrary will. To my astonishment I found that the audacity of tyranny, which had put down chambers and municipalities, and which had extinguished

* See *Manchester Guardian*, Saturday, October 15th, 1864.

the Press, had not been able to do one thing—to silence the Bar. I heard in the Courts of Justice, under the bayonets of soldiers—for they bristled with bayonets—in the teeth of power and in contempt of corruption, lawyers rising in their places and defending the cause of the accused with a freedom and fearlessness which could not have been surpassed in free England, or even by M. Berryer himself."

On February 7th, 1865, Parliament was opened in a Queen's Speech which Lord Derby described as one very proper to be addressed by an aged Minister to a moribund Parliament. It had lived to a good old age mainly on the popularity of Mr. Gladstone's Budgets; and the last, which was introduced on the 27th of April, displayed the great financier in triumph with all his calculations verified, his dreams almost realised, his reforms almost complete. With a surplus for the past year of over three millions, he estimated that on the existing bases of taxation the revenue for the coming year would be seventy millions and the expenditure sixty-six millions. So huge a surplus enabled him to make another great reduction in both direct and indirect taxation. The tea duty was lowered from 1s. to 6d. per lb.

**The Budget of 1365.**

"This reduction, with the growing inclination and taste of the country and with the increased importation to which it will no doubt give rise, must impart a powerful stimulus to the consumption of the commodity: and will, we trust, place this most valuable and most healthful of all the commodities of the poor within the reach of the many who do not now enjoy it at all, or who enjoy it in a very limited degree."

In the Budget of 1864 Mr. Gladstone had reduced the fire insurance duty on stock in trade, and the reduction was now extended to all descriptions of insurable property. The yield of a penny in the income-tax had risen to £1,300,000; but Mr. Gladstone did not shrink from a further reduction of one-third—from 6d. in the pound to 4d. in the pound. "By giving the income-tax at that reduced rate over to the hands of the new Parliament, I think we shall accomplish a double object." If it should be the pleasure of Parliament and the country "to approach the tax with a view to extinction" the tax would now be assailable; but if the view were taken that it would be wise to retain it at a low rate, "then the rate of 4d. is the rate at which in time of peace, and in the absence of any special emergency, we believe it may be most justly and wisely so retained."

**The Income-tax Further Reduced.**

After the Budget speech, interest passed from Parliament to the constituencies. His candidature for Oxford University involving no election addresses or speeches, Mr. Gladstone was free to turn himself to a constituency in which he was almost equally interested. His eldest son William was standing, for the first time, as one of the candidates for the borough of Chester, and in recommending him to the constituency he pleaded eloquently for youth and independence. It was important, he said, for the country that young men should be elected, and it was undesirable that they should be tied down by too many pledges. It was the father as well as the statesman who spoke: "Generally, gentlemen, I presume to say, I leave him to the formation of free opinion. Never shall I attempt to interfere with his conscientious convictions. I am a lover of freedom for the nation; I am a lover of freedom in the family." Nevertheless the son had not been left entirely without guidance:—

**W. H. Gladstone's Candidature for Chester.**

"I have advised him to declare himself among you an adherent of Liberal principles—not to measure too nicely and too stingily the application of these principles, but to take the principles themselves. And what do I understand by Liberal principles? I understand, in the main, this by Liberal principles the principle of trust in the people, only relieved by prudence; but by the principles of their opponents I understand mistrust of the people, only relieved by fear." *

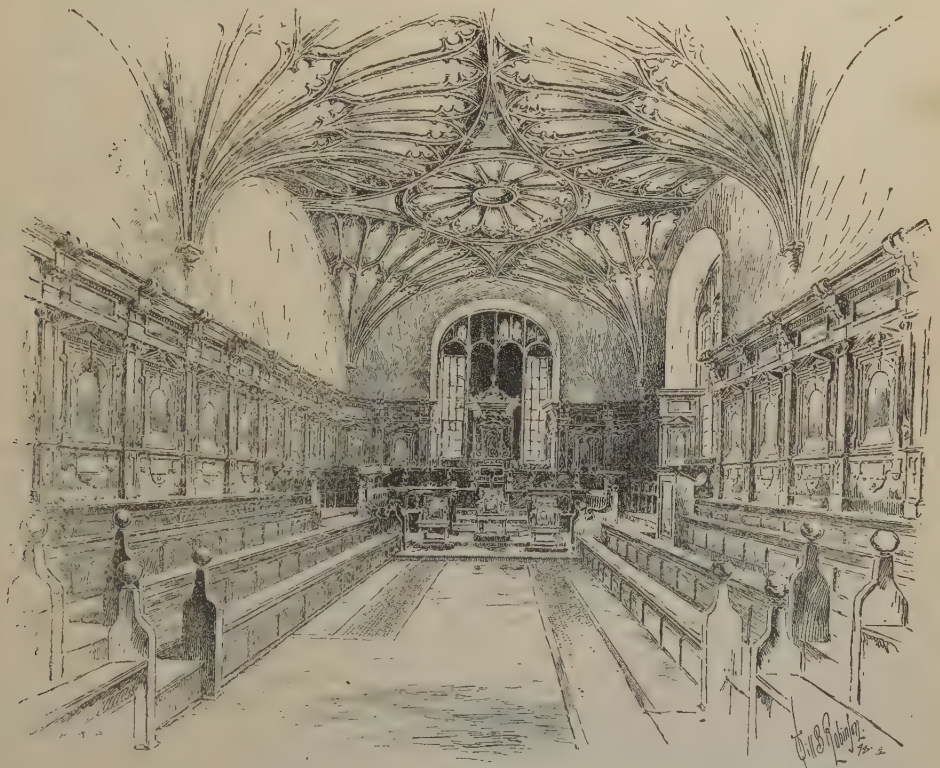


*Photo: Cassell and Co., Ltm.*

CONVOCATION HOUSE, OXFORD, IN WHICH THE UNIVERSITY ELECTIONS ARE CONDUCTED.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gladstone's friends at Oxford were doing their utmost to secure his return. There could be no doubt that the seat was in great danger. At the previous election, in 1859, a Tory of the old school had supported Mr. Gladstone on the ground that Disraelites were as bad as Palmerstonians. He could not recognise, he said, in any of the remaining theories of the nominal Conservatives "a shadow of the old *pro aris et focis*—the doctrine of the sacredness of Governments and the duties of station and the high-minded defence of religion as objectively true for all classes of the community." Mr. Gladstone, therefore, could only be accused of refusing to play "a sham Conservatism." Of course, those who wished to be deceived could not be held back; as for himself,

* *Liverpool Post*, June 1st, 1865.

"the Christianity of Mr. Disraeli, the theology of Lord Stanley, and the churchmanship of Sir John Pakington will deceive no more." * But in 1865 Mr. Gladstone's opponents were on stronger ground. They could point to his votes in favour of county and borough franchise extension in 1861 (March 13th, April 20th). They could remind the electors that in the same spring he had absented himself from a division on the Deceased Wife's Sister question; that in 1863 he had voted for the Qualification for Offices Abolition Bill—which enabled a Roman Catholic to become Irish Chancellor—and for the Burials Bill of the same year; † that in 1864 he had voted for the abolition of tests in the University of Oxford,‡ had spoken and paired in favour of Baines's Bill for extending the franchise in boroughs, and had voted against the Church party (May 12th, 1864) in an amendment on the Education Inspectors' Reports Bill. To these sins of omission and commission a great enormity had been added in that very spring. When on March 28th, 1865, Mr. Dillwyn, member for Swansea, moved "That the present position of the Irish Church Establishment is unsatisfactory and calls for the early attention of her Majesty's Government," Mr. Gladstone had explained why the Government could not vote with Mr. Dillwyn in a speech which was simply an indictment of the Irish Establishment. The Ministers of Queen Elizabeth, he had said, "would probably be not a little surprised if they could look down the vista of time and see that in the year 1865 the result of all their labours had been that, after 300 years, the Church which they had endowed and established, ministered to the religious wants of only one-eighth or one-ninth part of the community." §

Opposition at Oxford.

An Indictment of the Irish Church.

In order to explain his position to the electors Mr. Gladstone wrote on June 8th, 1865, to the Warden of Trinity College, Glenalmond. He would not sketch out a scheme because the question was so difficult and so remote, "apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day." There was, however, one clear landmark:—

"In any measure dealing with the Irish Church, I think (though I scarcely expect ever to be called on to share in such a measure) the Act of Union must be recognised, and must have important consequences, especially with reference to the position of the hierarchy."

* Pamphlet, Oxford election, 1859.

† March 4th, and April 15th. He had also absented himself from the division on the Affirmations Bill, March 11th.

‡ In the following year, however, Mr. Gladstone voted against a more radical measure—Mr. Goschen's Oxford Tests Abolition Bill. He still clung to the "principle" that the government of the University and the colleges should be lodged in the Church of England, though he was prepared to "grant to Dissenters all that we may safely give them." Mr. Gladstone's opposition was vigorously seconded and developed by Lord Robert Cecil, who had no objection to letting in "a chance Presbyterian" or a "mathematical Wesleyan," but recoiled from the thought that the governing body of the University might include, besides Churchmen, "Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Separatists, Unitarians, Mormons, and Quakers."

§ Whiteside (afterwards Chief Justice) was furious: "Is it a proper mode to deal with a great institution, linked with the monarchy . . . . to ask whether it is in a satisfactory condition? Why, the condition of the Christian Church is scarcely satisfactory in any part of the world." Northcote described the speech as a "terribly long stride" in Mr. Gladstone's downward progress.

This was not likely to appease the country parsons, who were now, for the first time, entitled to vote by proxy. It is possible that but for this the exertions of Mr. Gladstone's supporters might just have saved the seat. As it was, Mr. Gathorne Hardy was elected by a majority of 180 over Mr. Gladstone, who was at the bottom of the poll. Thus a connection of eighteen years, "so often questioned in vain, was now at length finally dissolved." * The "dangerous man" whom Palmerston had advised the moderates to "keep

**Defeated at Oxford, 1865.**

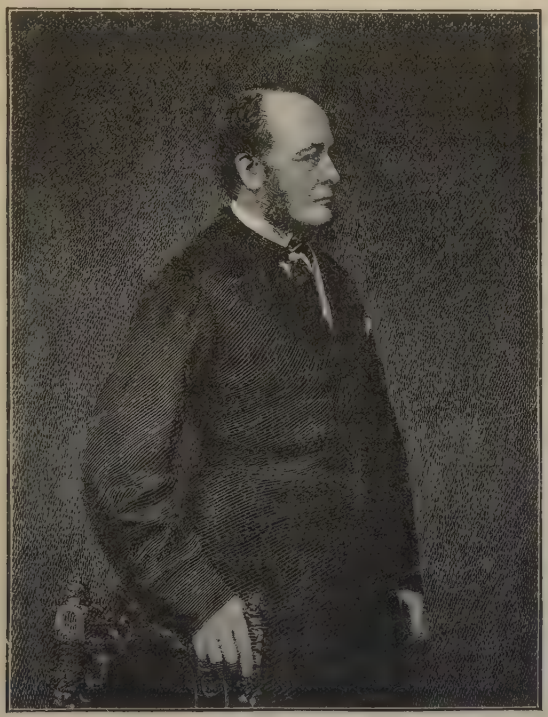


*Photo: Maull and Fox, Piccadilly.*

MR. GATHORNE HARDY (EARL OF CRANBROOK) IN 1870

at Oxford, where he is partially muzzled," was now let loose. Another barrier had been passed, another landmark obliterated. "There have been two great deaths, or transmigrations of spirit, in my political existence" (so Mr. Gladstone wrote on the 21st of July to his friend the Bishop of Oxford)—"one, very slow, the breaking of ties with my original party; the other, very short and sharp, the breaking of the tie with Oxford. There will probably be a third, and no more."

F. W. HIRST.

* Mr. Gladstone's words in his parting letter to the University, July 18th, 1865.

MET BOROUGH OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES POPLAR

# CHAPTER X.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS A CRITIC.

**Functions of a Critic**—Mr. Gladstone's Preoccupations with Theology—His Effusiveness—His Writings Classified—ART: Josiah Wedgwood—POLITICS: Italy and Greece; Egypt; Montenegro; Naples; Rome; Franco-German War; The Cabinet; Franchise—EDUCATION: Universities; Examinations—BIOGRAPHY: The Prince Consort; Blanco White; Macleod; O'Connell; Bishop Patteson—LITERATURE: Homer; Dante; Tennyson; Sheridan; Macaulay—Mr. Gladstone's Style—A CRITIC OF THEOLOGIES: As Anti-Vatican; As Catholic; As Anglican; As Orthodox; Nature of His Faith; Bishop Butler; The Setting Sun.

THE aim of the following pages is to represent Mr. Gladstone as a critic. Universality of mind, impartial appreciation of art, and of poetry, the highest form of art; sympathy with times ancient, mediæval, modern; intimacy through predilection or training with Nature in all its romance, and humanity in all its seriousness, are the qualifications bespoken by experts as essential to the critical faculty. It will be my effort to show how far, and under what limitations, all these are exhibited in Mr. Gladstone's writings. The scholarly side of his intellect has been previously and effectively handled, with special reference to his Homeric attainments and to his studies in Italian literature. Yet another chapter has been devoted to a survey of his theological attributes; and these two departments of his genius, though not absolutely ruled off from further consideration, must be admitted only to such comment as is necessary to complete our purview of his mental habit in his judgment on events, persons, books. Indeed, to exclude theology altogether would be to mutilate our critical presentment. Of about a hundred acknowledged essays from his pen, two-fifths are directly or incidentally in defence of Catholic Christianity; his first published book was on Church and State, his last "Soliloquium" was on the Validity of Anglican Orders. From his tribute to Macaulay's genius he turns aside to meet his author's strictures of the seventeenth-century clergy; on Leopardi's heresies he lingers with scarcely less unction than on his poetry; the Prince Consort's rationalising religionism evokes a dissertation on the varieties of spiritual conviction, with an anathema on Stockmar's non-Christian morality. The biographies which he cared to review were those of men prominently orthodox, like Bishop Patteson, openly defiant, like Blanco White, piously anti-dogmatic, like MacLeod. The books of other kinds on which he pounced most eagerly were such as "Ecce Homo," Réville's "History of Religion," Ingersoll on Theism, Huxley's carpings at the book of Genesis; while in his notice of "Robert Elsmere" he waves high the banner of transcendental Christianity, and pours on Ward's "Idealised" Romanism the measured scorn which thirty years later rose almost to fury in his denunciation of the Vatican Decrees. For dogmatic postulation, for hereditary Catholicism, for

**Functions of a Critic and Scope of this Chapter.**

historic Anglicanism, he felt himself to hold a brief: Art, Scholarship, Hellenism, even Politics, irradiated in their turn by his comprehensive scrutiny, seemed subsidiary to that which came upon him daily, the care of all the Churches.

It is not often that erudition so wide as Mr. Gladstone's is accompanied by effusiveness so uncontrolled. There are men whose scholarly passion is receptive, not participant; who dwell in "god-like isolation" like Mark Pattison, whose fastidiousness deters them, as it deterred Henry Bradshaw, from publishing what they alone know, but what their later judgment may supersede. They die and leave behind them a single book, or a few sibylline leaves. But with Mr. Gladstone the *amor habendi* went hand in hand with the passion to communicate; he had absorbed Bacon's recipe for the full-made man; the reading hardly ceased ere the conference and the writing followed. I remember meeting him during his visit to Birmingham in November, 1888. As we rose from breakfast something which I said made him turn to me and ask if I had seen O'Connell's Life, just published. On my answer in the negative he ran upstairs to fetch the book, came down with it open in his hands, read out to us a long passage, then stood on the staircase while we were below him in the hall, delivering an eager oration with all the familiar play of countenance and trick of gesture, till, mindful of the great effort awaiting him at Bingley Hall that night, his family closed around him and persuaded him to desist. The talk had come hard upon the reading, and the writing was to follow, in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*, two months later.

**Mr. Gladstone's Effusiveness.**

To this two-fold passion then, for absorption and for emission, is due the unique phenomenon, that the most laborious statesman of the century was also, so far as first-class periodical literature is concerned, its most prolific writer. In 1879 Mr. Gladstone collected for publication by Murray, his lifelong publisher, all the pamphlets, reviews, and papers up to that day, which he thought worth keeping. They fill seven mean little volumes of an inferior Tauchnitz sort, unworthy either of the material or of the printer; an eighth being added by his wish in 1897. In the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1898, the editor catalogues his contributions to the magazine, forty-eight of which have not appeared elsewhere. His Homeric views were first put forth in the "Oxford Essays" of 1857, compressed and popularised in his "Homeric Primer" of 1878. His bulkier volumes are the "Church and State," the books on Homer, the "Church Principles," the Horace, and the Butler. His Vatican "Expostulations;" Romanes Lecture, Bulgarian and Armenian protests, and a few besides, remain in separate pamphlets, mostly out of print. His criticisms may be roughly classified as Æsthetic, Political, Educational, Literary, Biographical, Theological. They traverse every subject except physical science, his ignorance of which appears to have been absolute, and not unfrequently detrimental, as will be noticed later on. His genius seems to move most easily, though not most commandingly, in the domain of art. An accomplished connoisseur and a judicious collector, he was deeply imbued with the principles Ruskin had authoritatively revealed; nowhere is his diction more felicitously

**His Writings Under Six Heads.**

persuasive, or his mental equilibrium less shaken by polemic turbulence, than in his address on Wedgwood in 1863.

His theme is the association of beauty with utility in the fictile manufacture of humble implements necessary to daily common life. He was addressing a Philistine public, steeped in ugliness, and proud of the ugliness which vitiated it. In ugliness—so ran the popular talk of that day—was something substantial, unpretentious, British; grace and prettiness were French and flimsy, solid utility and cheapness were our own: "provided an article were useful, what matter whether it were beautiful?" In lofty language he vindicates the claims of beauty: as archetypal and

Art. Josiah Wedgwood.

A WEDGWOOD PLAQUE.

(*In the South Kensington Museum.*)

divine, as permeating all creation, as respondent to an inborn craving in all but those whom lust of gain makes blind and callous. He admits that a beautiful object will be costlier across the counter than an ugly one; yet in the long run taste fetches a price in the world's markets, and short-sighted starvation of Art brings its own economic penalty. The first Englishman to realise this, to apply pure art to industry, to wed utility and grace, to combine in all designs, cheap and humble, no less than rare and costly, the greatest possible fitness and convenience with the highest attainable degree of beauty, was Josiah Wedgwood. Mr. Gladstone describes the crippled lad, pondering in enforced bodily helplessness the laws and secrets of his business, making an Egeria cavern of his lonely bedroom, a Delphic temple of his own searching, fruitful, meditative mind. He converted a coarse manufacture into an elegant art, rivalled, out of his penury, the royally subsidised glories of Sèvres and Dresden, reversed the dependence of his countrymen on foreigners for the finest porcelain, scattered his own productions through the length

and breadth of Europe. While to him is due the resuscitation in the West of the lost principles of Greek art, his works were no less notable for adaptation, softness of touch, hardness of colour, durableness, impregnability to heat and acids: cheapening ceramic manufacture, he never vulgarised it; the sixpenny saucer, no less than the costly ornamental *plaque*, was unsurpassable of its kind; defective articles were invariably destroyed as soon as tested; perfect workmanship is to-day amongst the criteria of genuine Wedgwood ware. He owed much to Flaxman, whose study of art was nursed in the same way through a childhood of deformity and weakness; but his own merit as a designer and an executant was independent of this valuable help. He "threw" with his own hands the finest specimens his factory produced; invented a pyrometer for measuring the heat of kilns, which passed into extensive use; the "silver pictures," or heliotypes, printed by him at Etruria, were, as we have lately learned, the precursors of photography. Finally—and Mr. Gladstone dwells with characteristic animation on the fact—he was conscientious, humane, and liberal in his relations with his factory hands. He cared personally for their competence, health, morality; he found a district of seven thousand underpaid and savage operatives; he increased them to a population of twenty thousand, fully employed, prosperous, and civilised. In 1760 John Wesley, preaching at Burslem, was pelted and compelled to fly; in 1780 he returned, to find "the wilderness a fruitful field, the country not more bettered than the people."

Mr. Gladstone's Political Essays divide naturally into foreign and domestic. His survey of foreign states traverses Greece, Italy, Egypt, the Franco-German war. His strong Hellenic feeling finds vent in a plea for Greece as a predominant factor in the Eastern problem. Italy at the worst period of Bourbon misrule drew from him the letter on the State prosecutions of the Neapolitan Government, and led him a year later to interpose in the problem of the Pope's temporal power. Mr. Dicey's utterances on the Egyptian question he combated in terms even more suggestive now than then. "La Débâcle," as narrated in M. Laveleye's volumes, induced a commentary on the great European war whose pessimist appraisement of the French character and prospects gave pain when written, and has been for the most part happily falsified. **Politics, Foreign and Domestic.**

To Mr. Gladstone, as to Byron and Canning before him, the claims of the Greeks upon Christian, civilised, educated nations appeared insuperable; reverence for their ancient benefactions to humanity augmenting indignation at their sufferings in recent centuries. The slaughter of their leader by the malignant and turbaned Turk, the horrible "children's tribute," the organised tyranny of the Phanariots, the massacre of Chios, are briefly described; he traces the Revolution of 1821, the Treaty of Adrianople, the grudging accord of territory by the Powers to the newly constituted kingdom, the failure of Otho as a sovereign, the cession of the Seven Islands; while generous consideration for their interests in the then approaching conference is warmly pleaded, with a citation of the exquisite lines from the "Siege of Corinth," themselves an echo of a not less perfect strain in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel"; imaging the dead patriots of the Revolution war as still alive and vocal in the sighing of the winds and the murmur of **Greece.**

the waters which wave over or ripple past their graves. One indignant apostrophe demands large type for English eyes to-day. He hints at a whispered proposal for the annexation of Crete. "Has not Crete," he says, "fought and fought well for freedom? Crete is one of the oldest seats of European civilisation. It is united with the Greek continent by every tie that can bind men, save the one still lacking, of political organisation; by common race, history, feeling, and, for the large majority, religion. I trust and believe we shall never set the abominable precedent of reducing into a new political subordination an island which is a member of a recognised and partly free Christian family, and which has written in the best blood of its citizens, scarcely yet dry, its title to share that freedom."

Egypt.

The passage is parenthetic in his notice of Mr. Dicey's plea for the occupation of Egypt by England. England *has* occupied Egypt, and his arguments against the step have become academic; but the article retains vitality, from its protest against enlargements of our Empire as increasing our already too great burden of responsibility and labour, its examination of the consequences that would ensue from the closing of the Suez Canal, its ethical assertion of a doctrine ever present to Mr. Gladstone's mind, that our occupation of a foreign land, be it Egypt, Cyprus, India, is morally defensible only on the ground that it is profitable to the nations thus subjected, and that we can make them see it to be profitable.

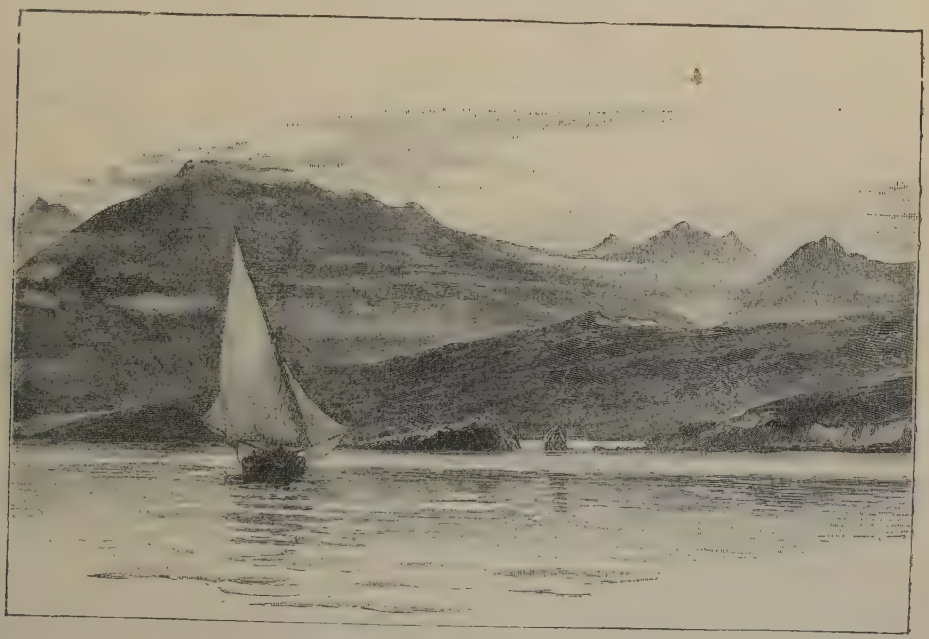
Montenegro.

Appended to his Eastern Papers is a charming little sketch of Montenegro, written as a prose interpretation of Tennyson's fine sonnet, which opened in 1877 the May number of the *Nineteenth Century*, and was reprinted in his "Ballads" volume of 1880. The tale of that "smallest among peoples," beating back the Ottoman for five hundred years, is the romance of modern history, a heroism greater in triumph over numerical inequality than the repulse of Persia by the Greeks. It has lacked a *vates* of epic stature, but Mr. Gladstone's ardent narrative embalms it. He reckons up its chiefs, "Vladikas," as they were called, Ivan, Danilo, St. Peter, men of giant mould, of Homeric simplicity, of moral no less than military ascendancy, holding episcopal as well as royal office. He tells of its incredible military prowess against enormous odds. Over and over again a thousand of its men discomfit twenty thousand Turks; once ten men hold a castle against ten thousand Turks. In the war of 1876 six actions are described, in which the carnage on one side, the immunity on the other, may compare with Clive's victories over the Bengalee, or the Sirdar's over the Dervishes. Nor was the race less admirable in peace than in war. A code of strictest rules prevented lawlessness and licence; the manslayer was shot, the thief was hanged, the coward, habited in female clothes, was beaten by the women with their distaffs. Each man has a bond brother, or *socius;* in fight they stand by one another; if one falls mortally wounded his brother slays him that he may be saved from Turkish torture and mutilation. Seduction and unchastity are never known, and the women are as athletic, as warlike, as patriotic as the men. In this single instance Mr. Gladstone lapses into anecdote. A sister and four brothers encounter seven Turks; all are killed except the girl and one Turk; he offers her life at the price of her honour; she stabs him with her dagger, closes with him,

and hurls him down a precipice. A Turkish Aga murders a Montenegrin: his wife intercepts and slays him. The Aga's widow challenges her to a duel, but comes to the assignation accompanied by an armed horseman. The girl shoots him, seizes and binds her faithless antagonist, and takes her to serve as a bondslave in her home.

We may pass more rapidly over his remaining performances on the field of foreign politics. In 1848, as another writer has shown, he had delivered a damaging speech against Lord Palmerston, rebuking as impertinent and unstatesmanlike the assumption which made England a *censor morum* over the acts of neighbouring nations. But in the presence of Neapolitan tyranny two years later he felt unable to retain this theory of abstinence. His letters to

**Naples.**



A BIT OF THE MONTENEGRIN COAST.

Lord Aberdeen in 1851, with his subsequent exposure of the lame and impotent reply vouchsafed by the Neapolitan Government, were eagerly adopted by Lord Palmerston, passed through many editions, exalted his repute on the Continent, won the devotion of the Italian people, and contributed no slight moral aid to the already smouldering rebellion.

The crimes and the expulsion of King Bomba are ancient history; so is the downfall of the temporal power, which Mr. Gladstone approved as righteous and predicted as inevitable in a review of Farini's "Stato Romano." His picture of the dependent, helpless Pope, "the great mendicant as well as the great incurable of Christendom," perhaps comes nearer to the higher eloquence than any passage in his written works. The motive of his article on the

**Rome.**

Franco-German war has, I believe, never been revealed. He wrote it under a strong sense of public duty, and wished it to be anonymous. Anonymous it could not be; and coming as an open secret from his pen, it was felt at home to be unbecoming, and bitterly resented abroad. Its condensed and graphic analysis of German military proficiency did not balance the almost minatory attack on Bismarck's annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, and the dislike towards himself which it inspired in Germany was long-lived and mischievous. France, stripped, wounded, and half dead, felt scant gratitude to the mediciner who poured in not oil and wine but vinegar and caustic; who detailed the infatuation and perverseness which had caused the war, struck at the fallen Emperor, taunted the prostrate nation with its want of political sagacity, its inability to constitute itself, the capricious, unstable changefulness which caused unrest to all its neighbours. In no less questionable taste was the apostrophe to "Happy England!" the glorification of our noble selves, of our "unsurpassed race," our insular, impregnable security, our maritime supremacy, our monopoly of materials for shipbuilding. Eight years later the author acknowledged that certain of his deliverances had been better unrecorded; perhaps some of us, though admitting the truth and power of the essay, and conceding that self-gratulation was at the moment natural, may even confess to the wish that he had expanded his recantation into effacement.

**Franco-German War.**

In his papers on domestic politics, as, with this one exception, in his foreign political essays, we sit instructed and grateful at his feet. Take as a specimen his description of the British Cabinet in "Kin Beyond Sea." He exhausts metaphor in presenting it; it is the Fourth Power, parasitical on the other three; the threefold hinge on which the portals of the Constitution turn; the State centre of gravity; the armour plate between monarch and people; the helm of the federal ship; the clearing-house of political forces; the meeting point of conflicting tides; the buffer spring which neutralises all shocks of social union. Time was its parent, silence was its nurse. It rose noiselessly, like Solomon's temple, like the tall palm of Heber's poem. It is integral both to Lords and Commons, nestling on behalf of both within the precincts of Royalty; deferential to all three, it overrules them. The monarch is in theory infallible, in practice covenant-bound, and it is the Cabinet which holds him to his bond. Great is the virtual power of the Sovereign, he is permanent while his Ministers are fugitive. Parliaments and Ministries pass, while he abides in life-long duty; he is to them as the oak in the forest to the annual harvest in the field; serene and leisurely while they are hurried and harassed, he has vast social influence, large actual prerogatives; yet without the Cabinet he cannot act, since theirs, not his, is the responsibility for action. And further, in its relation to the Sovereign, the Cabinet means the Premier. Unknown to the law, with no official rank, no formal headship over his colleagues, he is their mouthpiece to the Crown, their representative to Parliament and people; in his adhesion they cohere, his resignation scatters them. In theory, Commons, Lords, Crown, can each at any moment, acting within its rights, paralyse the body politic; but the Cabinet holds them all in check, the least visible yet most potent constituent in the unique organism which

**Domestic Politics. The Cabinet.**

it balances. The setting of the sketch is as rich as the analysis is lucid; unrivalled in delicate verbal workmanship, an unravelling of subtle, many-sided paradox, attainable only to one who had himself formed part of the machine depictured, and assisted internally in its operation.

Of a different kind is his duel with Mr. Lowe on the extension of the county franchise. In 1832 the middle class had claimed the franchise, and the claim was granted. To the late demand of the urban householder for like privilege no reasonable bar could be alleged; that, too, was conceded in 1867; and now in 1877 the villager was supplicating for equality with his brother in the towns; how could it be equitably denied? Mr. Lowe's dislike to the humbler classes was an idiosyncrasy; he believed of them everything bad and nothing good. To him the county suffrage was like Gloster's cliff in *Lear;* to be precipitated from its summit was to be shivered like an egg. He was always a rebellious subordinate. In 1864 he had resigned his place as Vice-President of the Education Department over a quarrel about Church schools, regretting his haste after a time, and making his moan to Mr. Gladstone in a line from the Latin Grammar—*Vapulo, Veneo, Exulo, Fio.* "I am beaten, sold, turned out, and done!" In 1866 he opposed the Gladstone Reform Bill in a series of magnificent speeches; and now, when a further instalment of the accursed thing seemed imminent, he remonstrated by an article to which this of Mr. Gladstone's was an answer. It traverses Lowe's arguments by an appeal to experience: we fell down a precipice in 1832, and were the better for it; we fell down another in 1867, and are none the worse—wherein does this third declivity differ from the other two? Is there an essential distinction between the artisan and labourer? Is the one more selfish than the other? Selfishness is a high-class vice, decreasing as you descend. Is he more swayed by passion? Villages, less crowded than urban populations, are less amenable to the political electricity which produces passion. Hodge pays his taxes, creates wealth, takes social rank as husband and father, no less than the operative or tradesman of the town; give him citizenship, make him a patriot, teach him to love as well as serve his country. His own views lagged far behind the later electoral creed of Radicals; he repudiated payment of members, manhood suffrage, redistribution of seats, cordially hated the idea of women's electoral rights, defended the plural vote. Yet ever and again peeps out his trust in the working man, which found vent in his famous "flesh and blood" protest; a dictum which earned for him the sneers of the few, but enthroned him in the hearts and consciences of the multitude. It is worth while to read Lowe's reply, a piece of clever special pleading, for Mr. Gladstone, too, knew how to quibble, as his writings often show; so that the reply and the rejoinder taken together make an instructive exhibition of sword-play.

**Franchise.**

Mr. Gladstone's educational dissertations were rightly limited to the history and work of Universities. He had no experience as a teacher, but his brilliant University career and his long connection with Oxford as its Member invested him with academic authority. In his inaugural address as Lord Rector of Edinburgh, assuming—what probably cannot be maintained—that Universities are essentially Christian institutions, he pictures them as the garners in which are stored the mental treasures accumulated by each

**Education: Universities.**

generation; intellectual factories for the methodising and application of all kinds of knowledge as they came successively into existence. The seven sciences blazoned to-day in the quadrangle of the Oxford schools sufficed for early times; to them were added, first Roman law, then Greek, then medicine. Through turbulent mediæval times they sheltered learning, established a far-reaching guild of philosophic energy, terminated feudal isolation, set up a higher universal in the place of a lower local life. Sadly he admits the decadence in the Universities of the present time; the loss of intellectual enthusiasm, study pampered by endowments, learning valued for itself no longer, but for its bearing on material success. Yet he fondly dwells upon the corporate feeling, the venerated traditions, the affectionate associations, inspired by the Universities of to-day, adulates the "princely gift" of teaching power which stamps the best professors as the posterity of Bacon, Grosseteste, Rich; upholds, with the onesidedness of a man to whom the subjects he undervalued were unknown, the paramount value of the Greek and Latin classics as instruments to train and not to stock the mind.

With yet more personal feeling and with a sense of closer continuity he returned thirty-two years later to his theme in an address at Oxford. The lapse of time had infused greater breadth into his views. At Edinburgh the Universities were to him daughters or handmaids of the Church, at Oxford they represent the self-assertion of the lay mind as an independent and rival element, the "world-power" inherent in them gaining upon the Church-power as years went on. The oldest modern Universities he pronounced to be Italian, following the intellectual impulse gained by Christendom from the Crusades; in one place grafted on the popular teaching of an individual, in another springing up through voluntary combination of local scholars, or perhaps from instruction supplied by the great monastic bodies. The reign of Henry the Second saw Oxford formally constituted, with near three thousand students, presenting an unbroken list of famous schoolmen in one century, of Renascence luminaries in another. Feeble in Reformation times, she yet reared Richard Hooker and founded the Royal Society; but confronts the Cambridge triad, Bacon, Milton, Newton, with no greater name than that of Locke. Even in her eighteenth century decay she produced John Wesley, Dr. Johnson, Adam Smith, Gibbon, Berkeley, Butler. Superficial and from without as compared with such essays as that of Mark Pattison on Oxford studies, it is a gaily written yet learned lecture, opening side lights into literary history, at once a soothing tribute to academic self-complacency and a useful abstract of Oxonian annals.

In an address to the Lancashire Mechanics' Institute in 1860, he surveyed the subject of examinations, viewing them as first in value among the material and social changes of the day. He saw in them the necessary educational stimulus of an age too busy to love knowledge for its own sake, yet heeding knowledge as an avenue to success and progress; saw, too, their practical value as an automatic discoverer of the men best qualified for public service; dwelt on their power of generating ready command of knowledge, clear perception and orderly arrangement of the facts absorbed, facility in concentrating the energies upon each single point in turn. Finally, with a flash of his habitual tenderness towards the proletarian class, he noted that of one hundred and eighty persons receiving at his hands

**Examinations.**

certificates and prizes, no less than one hundred and seventy-seven were wage-earning workers, "stealing the fragments of their time from rest and sleep, and offering them up, like solitary widows' mites, in the honest devotion of an effort after self-improvement."

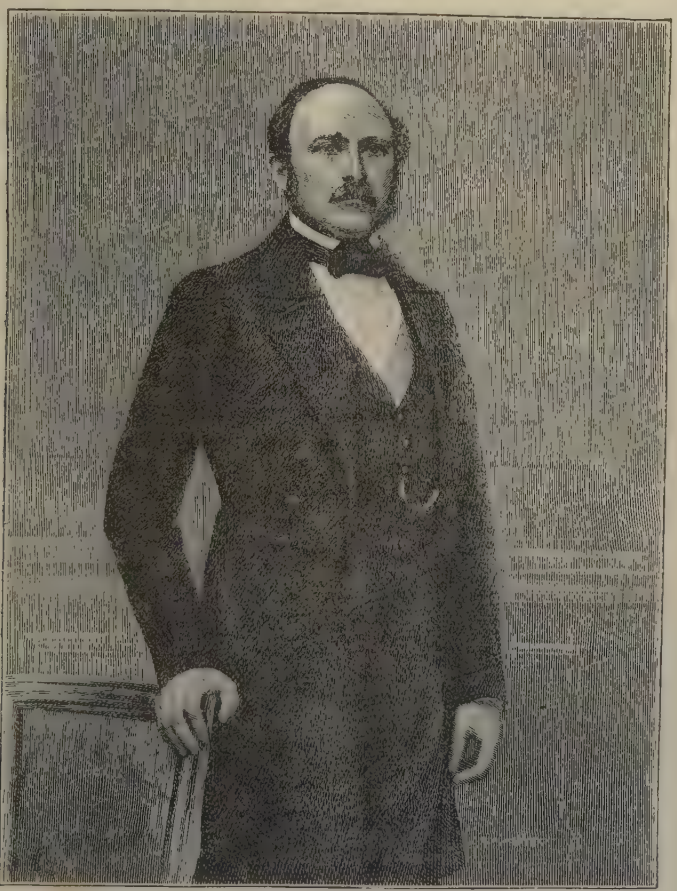


*Photo: Mayall and Newman, Lim., Brighton.*

THE PRINCE CONSORT.

Biographical criticism is reflex: the biographer is bound to his hero, and must bring out impartially all his manifestations; the critic reveals his own moral elements by raising into prominence for eulogy or disapproval selected points in the biographer's delineation. Applying this to the most prolonged and thoughtful of Mr. Gladstone's biographical notices, his review of the Prince Consort's life, we find him marking off for admiration three points in the Prince's character. First, his well-ordered life, which found room for bodily exercise, artistic enjoyment, Court functions, family duties,

**Biography.**

public business, practical philanthropy; seeing life steadily and seeing it whole, grasping all its aspects with philosophic penetration no less than external activity. Secondly, his retention into maturity of youthful, boyish freshness; he was what Novalis has called a grown-up child. Thirdly, his untiring sense of duty; not as an abstract conception, but as the will-service of one living ever in his Great Taskmaster's eye. Much he owed to external aids; to the supremely methodical German education, from which all waste is eliminated; to the personal influence of his uncle Leopold and his tutor Stockmar. The first schemed his marriage, with preparations so skilfully concealed as to leave full room for the romance of voluntary choice; the second guided not only his celibate youth but his early difficult wedded years, with a sagacity which, failing sometimes on points unintelligible to a foreigner, was as invaluable as it was systematic and devoted. A more difficult task than that imposed on the young Prince is hardly to be found in history; he was to neutralise by masculine aid the peculiar difficulties of a female ruler, yet to live a relative life, sinking his own individuality in hers. The highest intellectual superiority was to be abnegated by equivalent moral self-denial; his unwearied and all-embracing energy, pulsing along every social avenue of his adopted country, was to effect itself only through his wife; reversing Milton's arrogant epigram, she was to be for England only, he for England in her. The marriage was "an experiment in the science and art of politics for the civilised world"; and its amazing success was absolutely due to him. Some of us are old enough to remember the effect produced on high and low by the winning Royal object lesson of those twenty happy years; Queen and Prince, together in the visible unity of tender domestic love or the associated pursuits of highest culture, a source of joy and admiration to the millions who beheld them in their repeated progresses, and who exchanged the languor of traditional loyalty for the flow of personal affection; the metropolitan commercial animation generated by the presence of a splendid Court; the beneficent agency of that Court in compelling a lofty standard of conduct within the highest circles of society, frowning down and putting out of fashion vulgar ostentation, selfish idleness, conjugal immorality.

Prince Consort.

Popular, Mr. Gladstone admits, the Prince was not: the insular prejudice against foreigners retarded even his convincing refutation of its reasonableness; jealousy of his occult ascendancy in the royal closet swelled at one time into an angry outcry, which, so soon as it found voice in Parliament, was silenced once for all by the half-contemptuous denials and energetic assurances of the leaders on both sides of the House. His pure life rebuked and irritated the licentiousness of rank and wealth; his cautious rule of never visiting a lady without the company of an equerry, while it prevented scandal, maintained aloofness and prevented intimate regard. Mr. Gladstone specifies these drawbacks, dwells, too, on the Prince's manifest endeavour to pick the brains of every man with whom he came in contact for his own mental improvement, as preventing absolute ease in his society. With a smile we picture our great talker, eager then as now to pour out his boundless stores, checked and slightly mortified by the persistence of his Prince, too busy to be an *auditor tantum*, holding fast by courtly prerogative the *rôle* of questioner.

His notice of Blanco White, the gifted, the picturesque, the hapless, whose autobiography is amongst the five or six "Confessions" of minds powerful and tempest-tossed which claim an exceptional niche in the library of the psychological humanist, is a theological allocution merely. Throughout the man is sunk in the heretic. The notable Norman Macleod, Glasgow minister, editor of *Good Words*, Court preacher and Queen's favourite, a shrewd man of the world, elastic, receptive, mobile, appeals to the Presbyterianism in his Scottish blood, shocks his rigid dogmatism. Like all original and progressive men who abide through life in the ecclesiastical trammels of their youth, Macleod bristled with diverting contradictions. A "sound Calvinist," he defied the Westminster Confession; an "Establishmentarian from top to toe," he hated and tried to evade subscription; he disbelieved eternal punishment, demolished Sabbatarianism, prayed for the dead, preferred the "living Church to the dead Bible," yet retained the full confidence of his narrow denomination and the passionate love of his jealously polemical flock. And if his aberrations are amusing, so are Mr. Gladstone's comments on them. Not educated in Newman's Oxford, "he had not full possession of the grounds of dogma"; open to the wiles of the rationalising spirit, he "never was at heart a rationalist"; he "sailed over the abysses of speculation, but failed to sound them"; his intellect threatened to swamp the ship, but his large heart trimmed it. An episode in the review is an exhortation to the English clergy to take a lesson from Scottish pulpits: Mr. Gladstone's respectful allusions to the jejune commonplace of Anglican preaching testifies pathetically to innumerable Sundays in which the great Church-goer paid for his pious regularity at prayers by his reluctant martyrdom under sermons.

**Blanco White.**

**Macleod.**

*Photo: Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, W.*

NORMAN MACLEOD.

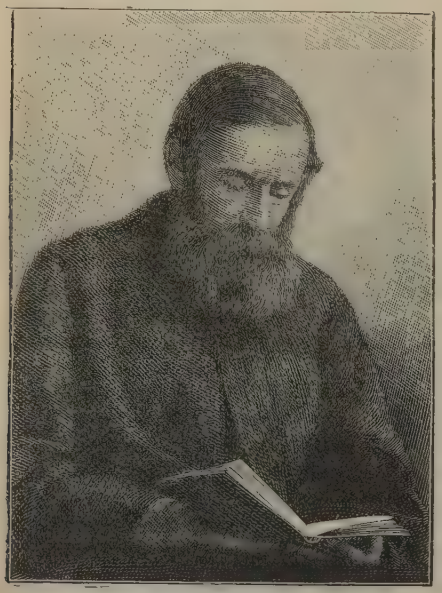
His handling of O'Connell is magnanimous and tender, singularly free from allusions to the Home Rule struggle—at its fiercest when the book came out. He sees in the famous Liberator the greatest Irishman who ever lived; leader, not unsuccessfully, of the weakest among nations against the strongest. The classes of Ireland were against him; by direct single-handed agency he disciplined and led its masses. His domestic life was touchingly beautiful: his love of justice boundless, over-riding all personal or party bias. Excepting Follett, he was the ablest advocate of the century; inferior to

**O'Connell.**

Brougham in Parliamentary eloquence, far before him as a platform orator. Over-censured and undervalued by Englishmen in his lifetime, he was yet a prophet, and deserved a prophet's reward: generously and disinterestedly Mr. Gladstone devotes himself to bespeak it.

Unreserved and devout is the homage paid, in the one more biographical tribute we need examine, to the noble missionary, Bishop Coleridge Patteson. I well remember him at Oxford, one of a charming Balliol and Trinity set, a cricketer and a hard reader, full of fun and frolic. He kept his seriousness out of sight: at fourteen years old a sermon from Selwyn, departing to his New Zealand mission field, had determined his future career; and after a short spell of curate work at home, following on his degree and fellowship, he left England for ever, to become the great prelate's right hand in Southern seas, to take charge ere long, himself as bishop, of the Melanesian Islands, to carry out in them the double task of converting heathens to Christianity, savages to civilisation. For eleven years his beneficent career continued; his death at Nukapu, a victim not to native hostility, but to British greed and cruelty, will not readily be forgotten. He turned to account his extraordinary genius for languages; he spoke twenty-three Oceanic tongues, reducing many of them to grammar. Max Müller has sadly told us how much comparative philology, how much linguistic science not to be reclaimed, lie buried with him in Pacific depths. The lives of saints are wont to nauseate; but Mr. Gladstone could not cant, and Patteson soared high above the typical paragon of the synagogues; as Thelwall in the Alfoxden glen elected to forget the jars and conflicts of the world of politics, so in this quiet threnody the affectations of sectarianism and the bitterness of theology exhale: there remain the hopefulness and serenity, the courage and triumph, of the religion which animates the brave man's conflict here, and lights his way, past misconception and disappointment,

**Bishop Patteson.**



BISHOP PATTESON.

*(From a Portrait in the British Museum.)*

"To where, beyond these voices, there is peace."

We have next to consider Mr. Gladstone as a literary critic. His Homeric writings, from 1858 onwards, have been deftly sketched in these pages; and my memory goes back to his first appearance as a Homerologist, a year before the publication of the earliest work there cited. The "Oxford Essays" of 1857 opened with a paper from his pen on

"The Place of Homer in Classical Education and Historic Inquiry," whose novelty and power accredited him for the first time as a Homeric teacher. I recollect him as a guest at the Oxford Vice-Chancellor's in 1858, the dinner party being followed by a large gathering of college tutors anxious to hear his views. I can see him as he stood in a corner of the drawing-room, the broad forehead and gleaming eyes, the arms crossed upon the breast, while the men thronged around him to question and to listen; the infirm Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Williams, joining them, his lame leg resting on a chair. I recall his authoritative, didactic delivery—"I am of opinion—I conceive—my judgment is"—the pronouncement of a recognised dictator on points which he had mastered, and in which those around him bowed to his instruction. The object of his paper was to vindicate for Homer the position not only of a poet, but of a historian, as a trusty chronicler of religion, ethics, civil polity, history and ethnology, manners, art, society, in a palæozoic world; as achieving for the Aryan races what was done for the Semitic by the Old Testament, recovering and recording the original form of European as distinct from Asiatic civilisation. To him, and not to the Greek dramatists, he sends us for primæval Hellenic life; to his fresh and genuine narration, not to their second-hand and imitative mannerism. To relate history, not myth, was, he argued, the obvious intention of the poet; his minute precision, his elaborate detail, point to conscious accurate record; sometimes even poetic beauty is sacrificed to historic purpose where matter interesting to particular Greek races can be produced; while merely imaginative embellishment would have been tested and contradicted in every such case by the comparatively recent traditions of his hearers.

Literature. Homer.

Proceeding on to more debatable ground, Mr. Gladstone puts the date of the poem forty or fifty years after the siege, pronounces the text to be trustworthy, showing incidentally his illimitable knowledge of each and every line; asserts the authorship of a blind Mæonides one and indivisible, recalls his heroic personages from the land of fable and shadow to the substantiality of flesh and blood. Let boys—is the moral deduced—let boys read Homer for his grammar, diction, poetry; let men read him as revealing an antiquity religious, social, moral; as mapping that humanity which is the proper study of mankind.

This summary of Mr. Gladstone's views, on both their hortatory and critical side, is amplified in his later works. How is it sustained, modified, or contradicted, by the resultant of Homeric scholarship to-day? The historical value of the poems is now cordially accepted; they are held to occupy the blank which, thus filled by them alone, unbrokenly develops into the later Hellenic age. On the other hand, the unity of their authorship is discarded. The Iliad and Odyssey are referred incontestably to the minds of separate creators. The tale of Troy is a poetic creation resting on no evidence but the poet's own: it would be fantastic to treat it as a solar myth, illogical to deduct the supernatural element and claim the residuum as historical. A Troad city may have been captured by Greek warriors, an Agamemnon have abducted a Briseis, an Achilles slain a Hector; further than this, the canons of historical criticism forbid to go.

Devoted to the study of Dante, and quoting him incessantly in all

his writings, it is strange that Mr. Gladstone should have added nothing to the wealth of Dantesque literature which has of late years proceeded from English pens. He cites him as a great Churchman, a great theologian, a profound thinker: one wishes that he had lived to read the eloquent dissertation of Signor M. Perini; published not long after his death, to prove the great poet's surprising knowledge of the highest problems in science. In his poems he alludes to the principle of universal gravitation, describes accurately the origin of rain, understands the prismatic character of the solar spectrum. In the imperfect condition of existing astronomy, he seems to have embraced only those conceptions which later researches have shown to be correct: the true theory of the tides, the precession of the equinoxes, the obliquity of the ecliptic, the structure of the galaxy. One thinks how eagerly Mr. Gladstone would have caught at facts like these, alien to his own reading, yet shedding glory on his idol.

Dante.

Of English poets Tennyson held unquestionably the closest place in his regard. In many of his essays, thought after thought finds shape in Tennysonian imagery. In the Prince Consort's character he sees "that pure severity of perfect light" to which poor Guinevre came too late to render homage; extracts lines from the same poem to express his bewilderment at Macaulay's ineradicable equanimity; compares the House of Lords, biding its time for sinister action against the Commons, to Modred eyeing Lancelot; applies William's sneer at Harold to the Conference considering the claims of Greece, the last campaigns of yielding France to the "ruining and overthrow" of Arthur's closing fights.

Tennyson.

Let us learn from his own pen what were the qualities of this great writer which so closely enthralled and informed him. His review, written in 1859, covers less than one-half of Tennyson's published poems, extending only to the first instalment of the Idylls. Within these limits, comprising probably the flower of his verses, Mr. Gladstone is impressed by, first, the stern infanticide with which, as his genius matured, he suppressed those earlier poems which fell below his ascending standard of perfection. Secondly, he hails him as the poet of woman; not, that is, like Tasso, as the favourite of women readers rather than of men, but as studying and representing women in form, motive, capability. He thirdly notes the increasing frequency and felicity of metaphor and simile which mark his later verses, placing him with a somewhat rash superlative at the head of all poets in his dexterously conceived and articulately drawn raids into nature for appropriate illustration of his thoughts. Fourthly, he praises his severity of diction, so far softening even coarse images as never to lapse into vulgarity, together with his chastity of style, which disentangles, poetises, elevates, the most intractable and rude materials: sees in him, finally, "the form and fashion of a true poet; delicate insight into beauty, refined perception of harmony, sympathetic observance of nature, dominance of the constructive faculty, and that rare gift, the thorough mastery and loving use of his native tongue."

The value of the detailed criticism is subjective, revealing rather the fashioning of the critic's taste than the excellence, patent or recondite, of the poet. With Homer here as ever on the brain, he challenges Œnone

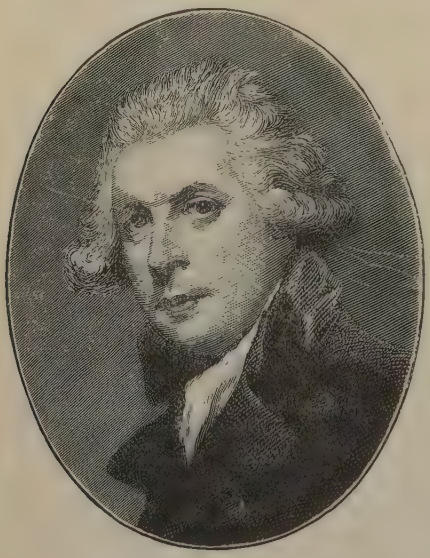
as classical not Troad, Ulysses as a restricted fragment from a cosmic character. He shows oblivion rather than disparagement of some among the exquisite early lyrical pieces; the Shakespearian insight of Isabel, the organlike swell of the Dying Swan, the unsurpassed music of the Lotus-eaters and the Gardener's Daughter, the antiphone of the Two Voices, the magnificent sermon of the Palace of Art; while in honouring the "Death of the Duke of Wellington" as "worthy of its immortal subject," he counters the general consensus which sees in it the first of the Laureate's decadent pieces. "In Memoriam" he touches briefly, refusing to analyse intrusively that sacred apotheosis of grief. One penetrating criticism he offers, that it is impersonal as well as personal, rescued throughout from egotism as being the cry of the whole human race rather than of the single mourner.

In dealing with the Idylls he lay under a two-fold disadvantage: he could but conjecture the line which their later expression was to follow, and he knew the prose romance only in Sir Thomas Malory's compilation. The genesis and growth of the Arthurian cycle, first as Breton folk-tales, then shaped by Geoffrey of Monmouth into a pseudo-historical narrative, swollen by the engraftment of independent legends, Catholicised by the late inventions of San Graal and the stainless knight Sir Galahad, had not passed into our literary history at the time he wrote. His discernment in his personages of consanguinity with Homeric types will strike most of us as far-fetched, nor can the poems without violence be compacted into an epic. In Tennyson's sequences, as in their original inception, they remain a series of distinct romances, the actors connected by genealogical ties, and bound up in a common relation to Arthur. To weave the tales into a whole would be to mar the integrity of each, as pearls suffer from the perforation which unites them in a necklace. Tennyson's own idea was rather that of Spenser, allegorical; "by King Arthur I always meant the Soul, and by the Round Table the passions and capacities of a man." Into the workmanship of these splendid pieces Mr. Gladstone enters with passionate delight; his admiration rising through Enid with her Griselda-like fortunes, Vivien, the Maid of Astolat, till before the wonderful interview in Guinevre between the forgiving husband and the repentant wife the critic melts into the worshipper.

His vindication of Sheridan, one of the last things he wrote, is scrappy; more like dinner-table talk than measured contribution to literary history. It protests against the current view of him as a brilliant evanescent meteor, shining out once for all in the Begum speech, then scattered into darkness; asserts his diligence as a statesman no less than his pre-eminence as an orator, says nothing of his sparkling comedies. Its motive is to be found probably in what he calls the "moral grandeur" of Sheridan's sustained opposition to the Irish Union, at the head of a small minority enfeebled by Fox's secession. **Sheridan.**

But of high and lasting value is the prolonged declamation in which, having knelt before the shrine of the first contemporary English poet, he lays a wreath upon the tomb of its most brilliant historian and essayist. In richness of colouring, effectiveness of grouping, and rhetorical point, this paper seems to me the best he ever wrote. Steeping himself in Macaulay's writings, he had **Macaulay.**

caught something of Macaulay's style; the resonant antithesis, the clatter of historic allusion, the squandered wealth of metaphor, the munificent prodigality of praise, the measured finality of peroration. There was much common to the two men, their love of books as books, body as well as soul, habiliment as well as text, their omnivorous reading, their fluency, their partisanship, their rushing into talk and writing as a physical relief to the o'er-fraught brain, their passionate absorption in the topic, weighty or trivial, of the moment, their unbroken moral rectitude. Spots there are in the Macaulay sun, but Mr. Gladstone moves uneasily in tracing them. His dislike of Peel shocks Peel's devoted follower; it is admitted sadly that he had not wrought the Christian dogma into the texture of his mind, an operation which might or might not have been to him, as to his critic, "a spring of improvement and delight," but under which Macaulay would certainly have ceased to be Macaulay. His love of polygamic Milton revives Mr. Gladstone's ancient horror of the Divorce Court; his contempt for St. Augustine and superficial conception of Bacon in the past, his hatred of Brougham, underrating of Carlyle, flagellation of Croker and of poor Robert Montgomery in the present, grate successively on his admirer's nerves, though we may thank this last merciless vivisection for a delicious epigram, in which the public is invited by Mr. Gladstone "to look on and see the immortal terrier worrying the mortal mouse."



RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.
*(From the Portrait by Sir J. Reynolds.)*

But his appreciation of Macaulay's merits is at once discriminating and complete. He is pronounced unique among mortals in his combination of intellectual with ethical endowments. Their combination is even paradoxical; he was at once splendid and simple, vindictive and tender, unsentimental yet tearfully emotional, a frank worldling yet a *preux chevalier*. His bounty kept pace with his success, his fame with both. Of the vices incident to authorship he is categorically acquitted, while to his fastidious care in composition and his jealousy of solecism and incorrectness, the literature of a slipshod generation owes an ineffaceable debt. The poetical element in his temperament was no less pervading than the rhetorical; if his memory sometimes swamped his mind, if the scenic habit of his genius dulled his capacity for analysis, if his preternaturally luminous view of what he recognised as truth, and the incredible mass of knowledge which sustained it, made him inexorably impregnable to contradiction, these defects, no less than his gorgeous qualities of ease in movement, perspicuity of matter, wealth of illustration, force of impact, against which they weigh as dust in the balance, constitute his literary completeness. Posterity may

study him perhaps with some reserve and scrutiny, with help from, rather than acceptance of, his solutions of historical problems. But study him they must and will; while the names of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, ring in the ears of civilised men, with them, though on a lower throne and in a less imperial chamber, Macaulay will inevitably be found.

In view of this finely appreciative estimate it is apposite to inquire, apart from the didactic value and self-revealing enlightenment of his written works, into the merits of Mr. Gladstone's *style*.

Mr. Gladstone's "Style."

With the great masters of prose in this century, with De Quincey, Ruskin, Carlyle, Newman, no one, we suppose, will class him. Diversity of learning, firmness of grasp, width of range, directness of informing utterance, stamp almost every paragraph of his voluminous writing; he is never tawdry, never hackneyed, never grandiloquent, incongruous, commonplace; and yet—he is never eloquent! Probably no single passage from his pen could rank among the choice morsels of pure prose which we cull from the models of English style. His *speeches* owed their transcendent force to other than literary merit: dissociated from the personality, the gleaming eye, bell-like voice, enforcing gestures, torrential evidence of self-conviction, they flashed forth no bursts of rhapsody, celestial at once in imagination, picturesqueness, melody, such as, in Burke's arraignment of Hyder Ali or the Chæronea fight of Demosthenes, made the hearers gasp and hold their breath as in the presence of supernatural inspiration. And his writing lacked the instinct or the leisure for the *limæ labor*, for the revising, correcting, reshaping, perfecting toil on which inspiration waits. Macaulay subjected the headlong transcript of first impressions to what someone calls "terrible" labour. The copyists in the Indian Education Office were able to pick out at a glance any manuscript of his from a pile of others by the multiplicity of black erasive blurs which marked each page. The proofs of the blotted copy were blotted in their turn, until every line of text satisfied both eye and ear, every paragraph concluded with a telling sentence, every sentence flowed like running water. With Mr. Gladstone the thought was everything, its framework less than secondary. He wanted the poetical fastidiousness requisite to perfect prose, which is unmetrical poetry. Robert Hussey used to say of his two brilliant contemporary pupils that Gladstone's compositions were full of grandeur, in rough, half-fashioned dress, Charles Wordsworth's exquisite in workmanship, with not much substance. To the last Mr. Gladstone ignored in his estimate of others the magic of literary elegance when the writer or the subject fretted him; thought the "Vie de Jésus" dull, could not read George Eliot.

His own sentences are sometimes ungainly—one longs to correct them, as Tennyson longed to rewrite the "Christian Year"—sometimes so obscure, that many readings hardly clear them. He overlooks the warning of Horace—*difficile est propriè communia dicere*, it is difficult to introduce vulgar sayings appropriately—if we may for our purpose utilise John Wilkes's rendering of a much disputed passage. "It was Prussia," he says, "who bolted"; he finds no difficulty in *settling the hash* of the Schoolmen; *sauce for the gander* illustrates a grave impeachment of the Pope, who is also said to enlarge the Canon Law *off his own bat*. The horse has been brought to the water so often that a newer metaphor might have been applied to the Roman States. We are not to aggravate

religious controversies by "pouring into them Cayenne pepper." Dr. Réville on the book of Genesis seems to *score one* when he discovers that Seth had a son. Patroclus is *button-held* by Nestor in the eleventh book of the Iliad. In his paper on Tennyson, he lauds the power of purging out vulgarity from ideas ordinarily tinged with it as an incommunicable privilege of genius; he has not in these cases exercised it. An extensive list might also be framed of strange words used by him, not defensible on the ground of their peculiar appositeness: *clerisy*, *constitutive*, *clamant*, *theurgic*, *actuation*, may possibly be found in dictionaries; hardly *curialism*, *inerrability*, *transelemental*, *henotic*, *cheirotony*, *illogic*, *inequalitarian*, *ptochocracy*. He sometimes airs quotations which are not apt or new; *facilis descensus*, etc.; *nec viget quicquam*, etc., twice if not three times; *sic vos non vobis*; P.P., clerk of this parish; the hackneyed line from Wordsworth's Ode. I think it is Mr. Frederic Harrison who says that a familiar extract may be gracefully imbedded in a sentence, but is aggravating in inverted commas. His written compositions, to sum up, are virile, practical, convincing, always impetuous, often brilliantly imaginative, sometimes prophetic, sometimes, though rarely, sermonic; crammed with priceless knowledge, instinct with life-long culture—but his phrases are not inevitable, his tonic resources not flexible, his prose not melodious or rhythmic, his style in no sense classical.

Mr. Gladstone's quality as a theologian has been treated in this volume by an able pen; but the side of him which I am called upon to delineate will be marred by incompleteness unless something may be said, less as to the beliefs which he had accumulated for his own consumption, than as to his investigation and judicial estimates of other forms of faith and unfaith—unless, that is, I may briefly notice him, not as a theologian, but as a critic of theologies. It was due to his mental constitution that he should approach these, where they crossed his own, in a warlike rather than a speculative spirit, with generous recognition and incidental accord, but by invariable comparison, tolerant or hostile, with his own immutable standpoint. From that fixed centre he sweeps the circle of theological antagonism, rides forth armed as (1) Catholic against Ultramontane; (2) historical and dogmatic against individualist and undenominational; (3) Anglican against Papist; (4) orthodox against rationalist. His "swashing blow," as the serving-man in *Romeo and Juliet* called it, is dealt at Vaticanism, according to the law which most embitters controversialists against the deviations which come nearest to themselves. In his "Courses of Religious Thought" he magnifies the imposing title of the Roman Church, its closely serried organisation, traditional continuity, note of holiness through the devout millions of adherents whom its machinery controls and its teaching nourishes. But he denounces unsparingly its vices; hostility to modern culture and mental freedom, incompatibility with advancing progress, jealousy of an unrestricted Bible, tendency to foster immorality in the States, unveracity in the individuals, who imbibe its influence. Finally, in his tract on the Vatican Decrees, he thunders against the Papal Chair, as forfeiting her ancient boast of *semper eadem* to unwarranted novelties of faith, to the assertion

**A Critic of Theologies.**

**As Anti-Vatican.**

of temporal authority over civil governments; as maintaining for the first time in ecclesiastical history the personal infallibility of the Pope.

Allegiance to his conception of a historic Church, and jealousy of the merely personal devotion which ignores it, comes out, as we have seen, in almost all his writings. Leaning with his whole weight on the now somewhat discredited Vincentian Canon, he postulates the acceptance of a certified body of truths, expressed in formal creeds, graced by sacramental symbols, issuing in theoretically perfect morality, as established by universal and continuous Christian testimony, and therefore fortified by an intellectual authority which cannot be disregarded without harmful spiritual defect. Yet he had to reckon with the fact that the vast multitude whom he groups under the name of "Undenominational Protestant," though sincerely and undeniably Christian, repudiates this "historic" view. He deals with them in his papers on "Heresy and Schism," on the "Evangelical Movement," on the "Courses of Religious Thought." He pronounced their theology unscientific, their intellectual basis unsound. Yet between these irreconcilable disputants, the independent liberty-loving dissenters and the rigid sacerdotalist, was maintained a strong mutual regard. He saw in English Nonconformity a robust, consistent application of the principles of the kingdom of God to the business of national life. He saw that when public politics crossed the line of public morality, the dissenting pulpits were clamorous for righteousness, justice, mercy, when the clergy were too often silent, or active on the other side. And they loved him in their turn, not only on political grounds, or through pleasure at his Irish Disestablishment, but recognising religious affinities in their common distaste for Erastianism, their common hatred for tyranny, respecting even in early days his idealism and earnestness in contrast to the cynical opportunism of his greatest political opponent. And already since his death their affection for his memory has been eloquently voiced by one of the ablest among their political and religious representatives. **As Catholic.**

He was Anglican as against Anglo-Romanist. Nowhere has he put this more forcibly than in his powerful review of "Ward's Ideal." He saw in the English Church the sole divinely accredited witness to religious truth within these realms; he saw in English Romanists a schismatic and an excised community. Some of his coævals, like Manning and Hope-Scott, went on to Rome, some, like Mark Pattison, went back to Rationalism, but, "the aged statesman on his Hawarden death-bed was still," says his friend Mr. Meynell, "the Oxford undergraduate in his religious attitude, down even to the detail of clinging to Newman's words." **As Anglican.**

Into his assaults on Rationalism he threw something of moral indignation. The positions he here assumes mark a perpetually noticeable limitation in Mr. Gladstone's mind: he had never grasped the scope and force of the scientific demurrer to accepted revelation. His paper on Sheppard's Bible, his answers to Réville and Huxley, show his entire unconsciousness of the reflux in Biblical criticism, the readjustment of men's attitude towards the Divine economy as operative on the moral and physical development of mankind, which becomes imperatively consequent on recent discoveries and **As Orthodox.**

doctrines. He could meet particular details, the swine-miracle, the Mosaic firmament, the cosmogonic succession, with dialectic but nescient dexterity; the main assault he left altogether unopposed, because, like his old friend Liddon, he had never been educated to understand it.

Its apprehension would have validated his criticism, would not have impaired his faith. For, first, his reason was implicit; his tendency to belief was fortified by moral predisposition; he approached dogmatic statements with an antecedent presumption in their favour supplementary to the explicit evidence they presented. Newman, in his Grammar of Assent, has made the phenomenon intelligible. There are minds, he tells us, which find it easier to believe implicitly anything which they *ought* to believe, than to work out truth independently without reference to injunctions which impress on them as authoritative. And such a mind was Mr. Gladstone's; his quick and vigilant conscience, his unbetrayed spiritual experience, saw proof where mere intelligence hesitated, reasoning not by logical rule but by an inward faculty.

Nature of his Faith.

BISHOP BUTLER.

(*From a Print.*)

And, secondly, his intellect reposed through life on the teaching of the great doctor to whom he owed in boyhood his equipment for metaphysical and theological research, and to whom he turned in his decay for the *viaticum* of his latest change,—"*A te principium, tibi desinet.*" He had learned from Bishop Butler that the guide to practical wisdom, moral action, religious belief, is probable or presumptive evidence: that where the affirmative chance of truth predominates over the negative, we are bound to follow its preponderance. *Absolute* scientific certainty cannot exist, since even if a demonstration as presented to us be intrinsically perfect, possibility of error lurks in the fallible human faculty which appropriates it. *Virtual* certainty exists in the domain of "necessary matter," where doubt is excluded and irrational. There remains a probable region, into which doubt must enter, in which it is the duty of the understanding to compare and distinguish favourable and unfavourable evidence, and to believe or reject as the confirming evidence is in excess or in defect; and this is the region of intellectual belief. Walking by this rule, he had trained himself to measure evidence, expecting sufficiency not perfectness of proof; had found, as he believed, sufficient proof of the existence of a righteous self-revealing God, of the binding force of Gospel dogmas, of the supremacy of the Catholic Church, as truths at once supported by external witness and satisfying deepest needs. His "Butler Studies" formed the last sustained effort of his pen, and he flung into them all his

Bishop Butler.

strength. Nothing in his last years is more touching than this senile reversion to the studies of his intellectual boyhood. Opening the Analogy in his college days, he had found in it a scientific foundation for life-long religious stability; had laid it by, with The Setting Sun. other scholastic equipage, during the storm and stress of a life full charged with absorbing labour and anxiety; and now, on the verge of the grave, dedicated his new-found leisure to formulate for his own delight and as a bequest to other minds the principles on which his immaturity had been nursed. In the closely-reasoned preface, in the defence against impugners, in the skilful analysis of the chapters and illuminating commentary on the text, his mind leaps the intervening chasm, and across threescore years and ten the ardent youth of eighteen years beginning life joins hands with the time-worn veteran of eighty-eight who was resigning it:—

> "Thus when the sun, prepared to rest,
> Hath gained the precincts of the west,
> Though his departing radiance fail
> To illuminate the hollow vale,
> A lingering light he fondly throws
> On the dear hills where first he rose."

W. TUCKWELL.

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# CHAPTER XI.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS LEADER OF THE HOUSE AND REFORMER, 1865-68.

Causes of the Defeat at Oxford—A Candidate for South Lancashire—"Unmuzzled"—Death of Palmerston: An Appreciation—Mr. Gladstone Leader of the House—Another Surplus—The Coal Supply Panic—Beginning the Reduction of the National Debt—Coercion for Ireland—A New Era—The Reform Bill of 1866—The Adullamites—The Second Reading: The Great "Banner" Speech—The Division—Replying on an Interruption of Disraeli's—Resignation of Earl Russell's Government—A Visit to Rome—Manning's Anxiety to Conciliate Gladstone—An Interview with the Pope—Disraeli "Dishes" the Whigs—Mr. Bright and the Tea-room Party—The Compound Householder Again—The Reform Bill Passed—Mr. Gladstone on Trade Unions—Receiving a Deputation of Trades Unionists—Disraeli and Gladstone Face to Face—The Irish Establishment Doomed—The Three Resolutions—Parliament Dissolved.

MR. GLADSTONE'S defeat at Oxford, recorded at the end of Chapter IX., had been dictated by considerations more purely political than are usually associated with a learned or ecclesiastical body. Previous contests, Archdeacon Denison notwithstanding, had turned mainly on academic problems, theological difficulties, Anglican privileges. This was hardly surprising. There was a change in the country as well as in the University. The reactionary movement at Oxford reflected, as usual, a progressive movement in the nation. For more than thirty years the settlement of 1832 had resisted all the efforts of the Reformers. The opiate of Palmerstonian supremacy seemed to have deadened every form of political agitation, and to have made Lord John Russell's nickname* something more than a political jest. In fact, Lord John himself, who had been so eager for an extension of the suffrage in the fifties, was content in 1863 to "rest and be thankful;" and about the same time John Bright admitted sorrowfully to some stout Liberals whom he happened to meet as he was passing through Huddersfield, "We shall never do any good until that old heathen [Palmerston] is out of the way."

**Causes of the Defeat at Oxford, 1865.**

But Mr. Gladstone's speech on Baines's Borough Franchise Bill had set the question of Reform once more upon its legs; and it was hardly surprising if, to put it in his own words, it lost him the "indulgent confidence" of his erudite but reactionary constituents. At the General Election of 1865, he continued—

"the cup of my offences was full and running over, and I believe, so far as I have been able to learn or judge, that the final delinquency which put my case beyond all patience and beyond all bearing was that I had made a declaration in debate, in the House of Commons, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, to the effect that if we were opposed to the extension of the suffrage to our fellow-countrymen it became us to show good cause why our fellow-countrymen should not be admitted to that privilege.

* "Finality Jack."

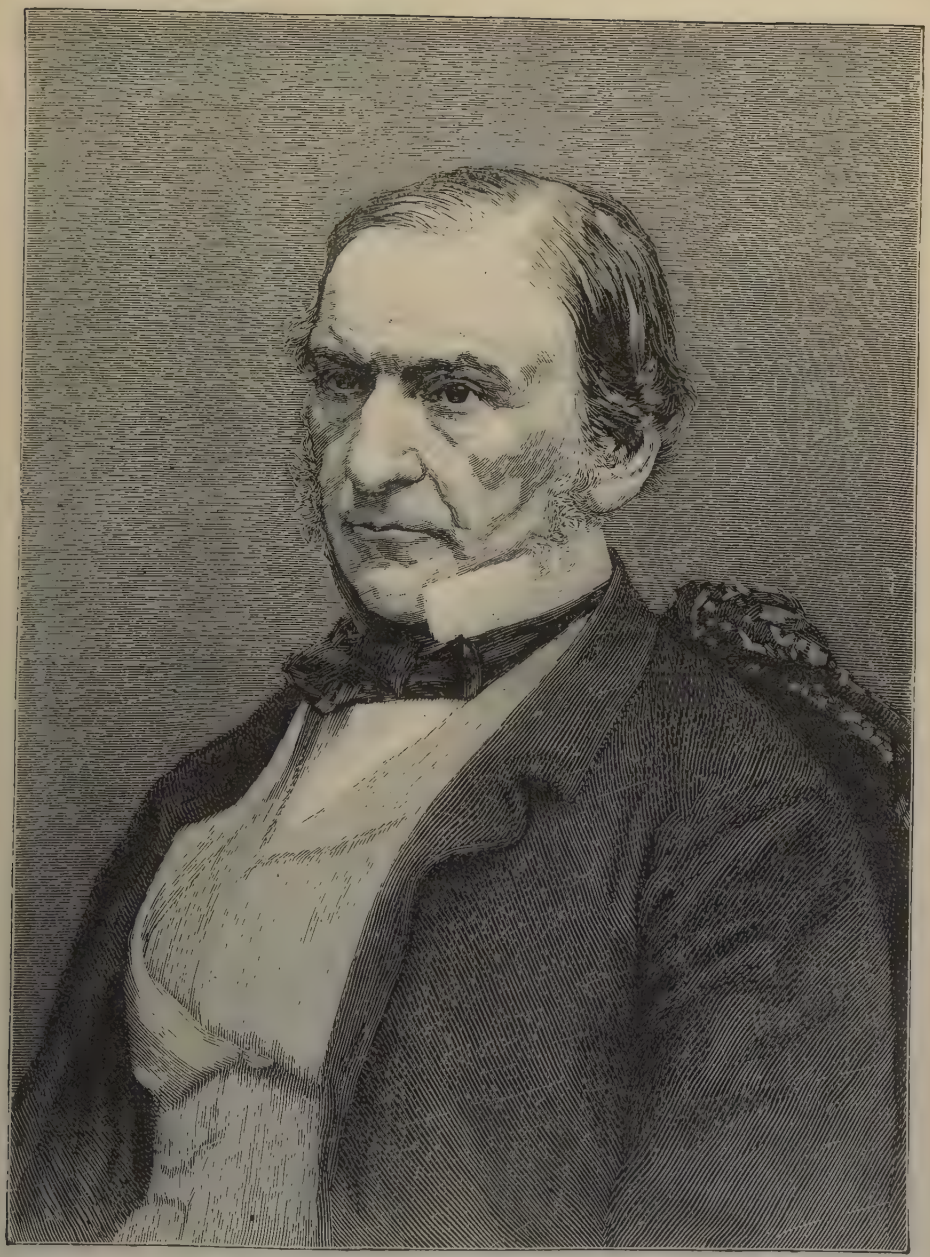


Photo: Samuel A. Walker.

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1865.

"Great was the horror that was produced by that revolutionary declaration. It was impossible to find words to paint the violent and dangerous character of my opinions without going back to the agitated and excited period of the French Revolution; and I was told across the House of Commons, by the gentleman who [afterwards] became the hero of Reform [Disraeli], that I had revived the doctrine of Tom Paine; and having succeeded in fastening upon me a relationship to that now almost forgotten hero of his day, it is no wonder that he fairly frightened the University of Oxford out of returning me to Parliament." *

So that the £10 suffrage which had been the badge of revolution in 1832 was already in 1865 regarded in the same quarters as the very basis of the Constitution and the test of political orthodoxy. But the same causes which had slowly undermined his position at Oxford had given Mr. Gladstone a firm hold on the affections of the labouring classes:—

"My loss of that much-prized and valued honour, the representation of the University, enabled me to submit my name and character as a candidate for the representation of the great and distinguished county [of Lancashire], and it enabled the electors . . . . to return me to Parliament, upon forty-eight hours' notice, as member for the most populous district and for the most extended county constituency in England."

Mr. Gladstone had lost no time. As soon as his death in Oxford was certain, his soul was marching on in South Lancashire.† On the 18th of July, 1865, he was in Manchester, and made a great speech in the Free Trade Hall, in which he recorded and vindicated the long roll of Liberal measures: "the emancipation of Roman Catholics; the removal of tests from Dissenters; the emancipation of the slaves; the reformation of the Poor Law; the reformation . . . . of the Tariff; the abolition of the Corn Laws; the abolition of the Navigation Laws; the conclusion of the French Treaty; the laws which have relieved Dissenters from stigma and almost ignominy, and which in doing so have not weakened, but have strengthened, the Church to which I belong."

**Candidate for South Lancashire, 1865.**

But the most memorable part of his speech is that in which, tearing himself painfully from his past, he exults, almost fiercely, in his newly-found freedom. A deputation from South Lancashire had asked him to stand several years before. He therefore began: "At last, my friends, I am come among you—and I am come, to use an expression which has become very famous, and is not likely to be forgotten, I am come among you 'unmuzzled.'" Then, after a noble declaration of unalterable attachment to his University,‡ he proceeded:—

**"Unmuzzled."**

"But don't mistake the issue which has been raised. The University has at length, after

* Speech at Ormskirk, December 19th, 1867.

† "I will remind you of the remarkable song used during the late struggle in America—the song of Captain Brown:—

'Old John Brown is dead,
But his soul is marching on.'

I lay dead in Oxford; but in some manner or other I believe that in South Lancashire I am 'marching on.'"—Speech at Liverpool on July 19th, 1865. Mr. Gladstone was speaking "on 'Change" from a window, and it was remarked that his voice was heard distinctly in all parts of the "flags."

‡ See p. 150.

eighteen years of self-denial, been drawn by what I might, perhaps, call the overweening exercise of power, into the vortex of mere party politics. Well, you will readily understand why, as long as I had a hope that the zeal and kindness of my friends might keep me in my place, it was impossible for me to abandon them. Could they have returned me by but a majority of one, painful as it is to a man at my time of life, and feeling the weight of public cares, to be incessantly struggling for a seat, nothing could have induced me to quit that University to which I had so long ago devoted my best care and attachment. But, by no act of mine, I am free to come among you. And having been thus set free, I need hardly tell you that it is with joy, with thankfulness, and enthusiasm that I now, at this eleventh hour, a candidate without an address, make my appeal to the heart and the mind of South Lancashire, and ask you to pronounce upon that appeal. As I have said, I am aware of no cause for the votes which have been given in considerable majority against me in the University of Oxford, except the fact that the strongest conviction that the human mind can receive, that an overpowering sense of the public interests, that the practical teachings of experience, to which from my first youth Oxford herself taught me to lay open my mind—all these have shown me the folly—I will say the madness—of refusing to join in the generous sympathies of my countrymen, by adopting what I must call an obstructive policy."

On the same night, at Liverpool, Mr. Gladstone addressed an immense meeting in the Royal Amphitheatre; his son William, who had just been elected for Cheshire, being on the platform. Here, too, he touched eloquently upon the breaking of the tie with Oxford:—

**Speech at Liverpool, 1865.**

"If I am told that it is only by embracing the narrow interests of a political party that Oxford can discharge her duties to the country, then, gentlemen, I at once say I am not the man for Oxford. . . . In my humble and insignificant person, on the one hand representing that ancient body, on the other hand placed now for many years in the administration of the most responsible offices connected with the well-being of the country, I have honestly, I have earnestly, although I may have feebly, striven to unite that which is represented by Oxford and that which is represented by Lancashire."

In South Lancashire he found a new set of conditions—the development of industry, the growth of enterprise, the progress of philanthropy, above all the prevalence of toleration and an ardent desire for freedom. He had clung to his University "with desperate fondness," and to his Church with steadfast loyalty. But there could be no standing still: "if the Church of England is to live among us she must flourish and she must grow." When he turned to finance and showed how as Chancellor of the Exchequer he had succeeded, during a period of great prosperity and elastic revenues, in reducing expenditure from seventy-two to sixty-five millions, a voice came from the hall: "That's a nut for Dizzy to crack." Such was the prevailing opinion. The great majority of business men had been won over by the Budget of 1853. From that time the middle classes placed their confidence in Mr. Gladstone. The time for desertions had not come in 1865. The enthusiasm was tremendous. People felt, as one speaker expressed it, that "they owed a deep debt of gratitude to the noble University of Oxford, which in its wisdom and in the superfluity of its learning had thought fit to dismiss a practical man from its representation." The scholar is often better appreciated in the factory than the practical man in the academy.

The General Election resulted in a victory for the Whigs and Liberals. Two Conservatives headed the poll in South Lancashire;

but Mr. Gladstone was elected third. Lord Palmerston, whose health had long been failing, died on the 18th of October. The bearing of this event upon Mr. Gladstone's position may be inferred from the correspondence of Dean Church:—

**Death of Palmerston, 1865.**

"We have lost Palmerston. While he lived there was a tacit understanding that no internal battles of consequence were to be fought or great issues raised. He was like a great-grandpapa to the English political world, whose age was to be respected, and whose vivacity, spirit, and tact saved him from the fate of old men. Now he is gone, and no one knows what is coming. . . . The great interest is to see how Gladstone will comport himself. It is an awful time for him. The 'heart of all Israel is towards him.' He is very great and very noble. He has been the one man who has done any effective work in government lately. But he is hated as much as, or more than, he is loved. He is fierce sometimes, and wrathful, and easily irritated; he wants knowledge of men, and speaks rashly, and I look with some trembling to see what will come of this his first attempt to lead the Commons, and to prove himself fit to lead England." *

*Photo: Fork and Son, Notting Hill, W.*

LORD PALMERSTON.

(*From the Statue in Westminster Abbey.*)

The antithesis between the past and the future leader comes out in a brief note written by Lord Houghton to his wife: "I sat by Gladstone at the Delawares'. He was very much excited, not only about politics, but cattle-plague, china, and everything else. It is indeed a contrast to Palmerston's Ha! ha! and *laissez faire*."

At the beginning of the following year it fell to the new Leader of the House of Commons to move that an address be presented to the Queen praying her Majesty to give directions for a monument to be erected in the collegiate church of Saint Peter, Westminster, to the memory of Lord Palmerston. "It was his happy lot," said Mr. Gladstone, "as Foreign Minister and as Prime Minister of this country, to be closely associated with that remarkable extension of constitutional freedom in Europe which has been among the happy characteristics of the present age. I need not speak of Belgium; I need not speak of the Peninsula: but as to Italy I will venture to say that Lord Palmerston was one of the first and most prophetic of those who in England discerned the growing and gathering destinies of that country; and I

**An Appreciation of Palmerston, 1866.**

* Life and Letters of Dean Church, p. 171.

believe it would not be extravagant to say that in that kingdom his name may claim a place by the side and on a level with that of her most distinguished patriots." Lord Palmerston had also exhibited a deep and unfailing interest, not by words merely, but by actions, in the fate of "the unhappy African race, whose history is for the most part written only in blood and tears." Mr. Gladstone touched on Palmerston's popularity in the country and in the House of Commons, and indicated in two or three happy sentences the secret of the dead statesman's power:—

"All who knew Lord Palmerston knew his genial temper, and the courage with which he entered into the debates in the House; his incomparable tact and ingenuity, his command of fence, his delight—his old English delight—in a fair stand-up fight. Yet, notwithstanding the possession of these powers, I may say I think there was no man whose inclination and whose habits were more fixed, so far as discussion was concerned, in avoiding whatever tended to exasperate, and in having recourse to those means by which animosity might be calmed down. He had the power to stir up angry passions, but he chose, like the sea-god in the Æneid, rather to pacify:

"'Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.'"

*Photo: A. Ken, Paris.*

MR. GOSCHEN IN 1866.

On the whole, of course, Mr. Gladstone did not either admire or like Lord Palmerston; but he was almost always ready, in private as well as in public, to recognise his good qualities. At first, indeed, it was otherwise; for he once told a friend how intense was his surprise as well as delight at Lord Palmerston's reception of the Letters to Lord Aberdeen. The first time they met after publication was in the House. As Mr. Gladstone, coming in from a division, passed between the Treasury Bench and the table, Lord Palmerston seized him by the hand and greeted him with a hearty "Well done!"

The Ministry was now reconstructed, Earl Russell being Prime Minister, and Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, Leader of the House of Commons. A great deal of curiosity was felt and a great deal of scepticism exhibited as to Mr. Gladstone's qualifications. Nor did he himself underrate the difficulties of his position. One of his favourite dicta in later life bore upon leadership. "It is a difficult task," he would say, "to lead the House of Commons, a more difficult one to manage a Cabinet

**Mr. Gladstone Becomes Leader of the House, 1866.**

Council; but to lead an army in the field must be the most difficult of all."

Several new men—Mr. W. E. Forster, Mr. Goschen, and Mr. Chichester Fortescue—were admitted into the Ministry of Earl Russell; and on December 11th Dean Church wrote to his friend Dr. Asa Gray:—

"... Well, you will ere this have heard of the issue of the great election fight. ... For the first time a Quaker becomes the 'Right Honourable' and sits in the Council, only making an affirmation instead of an oath. For the first time the Irish Lord Chancellor is a Roman Catholic. ... But we have a Ministry of newer blood and more detached from the old routine than any within living memory. The House of Commons, on the other hand, seems made up of much the same materials, and Gladstone will have a tough job to keep it in order. There never was a man so genuinely admired for the qualities which deserve admiration—his earnestness, his deep popular sympathies, his unflinching courage; and there never was a man more deeply hated both for his good points and for undeniable defects and failings. But they love him much less in the House than they do out of doors." *

Another Surplus, 1866.

Mr. Gladstone's first business was finance; and since the yield of the taxes was increasing at the same time that the national expenditure was diminishing, there was once more a handsome surplus of one-and-three-quarter millions to be disposed of. In pursuance of a commercial treaty just concluded with Austria it was proposed to repeal what remained of the timber duties. This, with a repeal of the duty on pepper, involved a loss to the revenue of £400,000. With the remainder of his surplus Mr. Gladstone proposed to operate upon the National Debt.

The Coal Supply and the National Debt.

If it were asked why he did not continue his policy of reducing the income-tax, there would be one simple and sufficient answer. The yield of a penny in the income-tax had now risen to £1,400,000; and the available surplus only amounted to £1,350,000. But in any case Mr. Gladstone would probably have preferred the relief of the future to that of the present taxpayer. In 1864 he was already busy converting perpetual into terminable annuities; and it is evident from the Budget speech of that year that even then he was looking forward to a reduction of the National Debt as the true sequel to his Free Trade measures: "The National Debt appears to me to be a very formidable burden, grave and serious even in the midst of our wealth and prosperity, and likely to become even more grave and serious in its pressure, if our prosperity turned out to be less permanent and less stable than most of us are disposed to believe." His attention had also been drawn to coal by the debates on the 11th clause of the Commercial Treaty with France (in 1860), and by his interest in the Flintshire coalfield.† At the beginning of 1866 Messrs. Macmillan sent him Jevons's book on the "Coal Question," in which that brilliant economist concluded from geological and other

* Life and Letters of Dean Church, p. 178.

† On December 30th, 1864, a lecture on the subject was given at Mold, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the vote of thanks in a remarkable speech, in which he displayed an intimate acquaintance with the conditions of the Flintshire coalfield, and ended by saying: "There is nothing which I, for one, should contemplate with such apprehension as the exhaustion of the mineral wealth of the country, and especially of its supplies of coal."

data "that we cannot long maintain our present rate of increase of consumption," and that "the check to our progress must become perceptible considerably within a century from the present time."

Mr. Gladstone acknowledged the book in a letter dated Windsor Castle, 24th February, 1866.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am not certain whether I owe to your kindness or to that of Mr. Jevons, my early opportunity of perusing his work on coal; but I have perused it with care and with extraordinary interest. It makes a deep impression upon me, and strengthens the convictions I have long entertained, but with an ever-growing force, as to our duty with regard to the National Debt. I think it is a masterly review of a vast, indeed a boundless, subject.

"But I feel that I have not the scientific knowledge which alone would make me a competent judge of the grave conclusions involved; and I shall look with the utmost interest for other and weightier opinions upon this remarkable product of the English economic school."*

The Coal Question, taken up by Mill as well as by Gladstone, soon became a coal panic. The book was quoted in the House of Commons, and it undoubtedly had an immediate effect in developing, if not determining, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's financial policy. Shortly afterwards, when Professor Jevons paid a visit to London, Mr. Gladstone received him in a very gratifying manner—"was pleasant and communicative—in fact, talked so that I could get little in."†

In his Budget speech of 1866, the Chancellor of the Exchequer marked the change in his financial policy with consummate skill. After preparing his hearers by an exordium of more than Gladstonian mystery, he kept them in suspense for at least an hour while he discussed the abolition of the pepper duty and the reduction of the omnibus duty to a farthing per mile. But the grave emphasis laid on these and other petty fiscal changes had a special rhetorical meaning. It was intended to enforce the great thesis of the speech, that the brilliant period of fiscal revision was at an end and a new age about to begin in which public savings should be devoted to the reduction of the National Debt.

**Reducing the National Debt, 1866.**

A long series of operations upon the Customs and Excise duties had relieved the springs of industry. The nation seemed to be at the height of its prosperity, and it was its plain duty, he insisted, to face the question of the National Debt. Steps must be taken to reduce a burden which would weigh so heavily in case of war or of diminishing trade; and he pointed out that the latter calamity might easily come about should the country lose its pre-eminence in the cheap production of coal. It was idle, of course, to attempt to put a duty on the exportation of coal.‡ He proposed, therefore, to attack the Debt, and thus, so far as possible, to relieve the country of a heavy mortgage before the time arrived for the decline of its

* "Letters and Journal of W. Stanley Jevons," p. 218.

† About the same time Mr. Forster sent his wife an account of a similar experience:—"I went with Gibson to Gladstone at ten, and talked hard with him till almost twelve. He was very free and cordial, and let me talk as much as he lets anyone; but he does as much of the talking as Johnny does little. I went over the Reform question with him, up and down, and I think he really took in what I said."

‡ Though, as Vice-President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Gladstone had proposed it for the sake of revenue.

manufacturing supremacy. The attack was to be inaugurated by two operations, called A and B respectively, which were based on the principle of converting perpetual into terminable annuities. By operation A, a Savings Bank book debt of £24,000,000, which involved a charge for interest of £720,000 a year, was converted into terminable annuities. These would terminate in 1885, involving in the meantime an annual charge of £1,725,000. By operation B, further stock was to be converted; and Mr. Gladstone estimated that if his proposals were accepted, £37,000,000 of the National Debt would be cancelled by 1888.

Mr. Gladstone did not remain in office long enough to carry through these changes. The success of the Prussian breech-loaders at Sadowa and the advent of Lord Derby to office in July, 1866, put an end for the time being to anything so humble and useful as the reduction of the National Debt. By the 23rd July supplementary estimates for the Army, Navy, and Civil Services had created a deficit which Disraeli met by abandoning the Savings Bank Bill. However, Mr. Gladstone did not let the matter drop, and in the following year (1867) Disraeli thought it politic to adopt operation A, the first and most important half of his rival's scheme.* Mr. Gladstone congratulated Disraeli on having "resisted the temptations to which he must have been subjected;" and urged that the efforts to reduce the Debt should not be slackened but redoubled, and that Ministers should turn their eyes not upon Continental nations, "which were wasting their resources on what was either idle parade, or, worse, a positive source of mischief," but upon the people of the United States, which believed, and was acting on the belief, that the true source and secret of future power lay in a steady and rapid reduction of the Debt.

Meanwhile the condition of Ireland was going from bad to worse. A paragraph had been inserted in the Address which was intended, said Mr. Gladstone in opposing an amendment, as a solemn denunciation of Fenianism. The discovery that arms were being manufactured and collected pointed to a widespread conspiracy, and on the 17th of February a Bill which introduced a temporary suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland passed rapidly through both Houses. The policy of coercion had become necessary because the policy of conciliation had never been carefully conceived or consistently applied. Ireland had become a police state; and it was to remain over-taxed and rack-rented under the spiritual tyranny of an alien Church and the mundane economy of absentee landlordism, until at last Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister, too late for loyalty though not too late for justice.

**Coercion for Ireland, 1866.**

But Earl-Russell's Government had, apart from Ireland, a task which

* Gladstone's reputation as a financier was at this time so great that in Parliament even Disraeli treated him with the utmost deference. Some idea of the style and method adopted by Disraeli in his country criticisms may be gathered from a passage which occurred in one of his Aylesbury speeches. What, he asked, had Mr. Gladstone done with the Terminable Annuities? "It was a feat of legerdemain, which exceeded any conjuring of M. Robert. He took one million and turned it into ducks, and another million and turned it into drakes; and for half-an-hour these ducks and drakes flew cackling about the House of Commons, till at last we got ashamed of one another and we ordered strangers to withdraw, and determined to keep it a profound secret until Parliament was dissolved."

proved beyond its powers. "Your hands will be entirely free. You are pledged probably to no one, certainly not to me. But any Government now to be formed cannot be wholly a continuation; it must be in some degree a new commencement." So Mr. Gladstone had written to Lord Russell immediately after Lord Palmerston's death. The "new commencement" was indicated in the speech from the Throne—"such improvements in the laws which regulate the right of voting in the election of members of the House of Commons as may tend to strengthen our free institutions, and conduce to the public welfare."

A New Era.

For many years Parliamentary Reform had been in a curious plight. All parties had agreed to "the principle," *i.e.* the desirability of passing a Bill to be called a Reform Bill. But at this point unanimity ended. Radicals were in favour of manhood suffrage. The bulk of the Liberals was prepared to concede —what all genuine Tories and a section of Palmerstonians violently opposed—a downward or vertical extension of the franchise. The General Election had turned largely upon this point—should the extension of the franchise be vertical or lateral? "What says Lord Derby, speaking through the mouth of his prophet Disraeli?" asked John Bright of his constituents at Birmingham, and answered: "Why, he says lateral extension of the franchise is what is wanted."

Parliamentary Reform.

The Reform Bill of 1866 may be regarded as a personal triumph for John Bright, just as the Corn Law Bill of 1846 may be regarded as a personal triumph for Richard Cobden. Or, again, the Bill may be regarded as the first-fruits of the alliance between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright; and this aspect was forcibly brought out in an Aristophanic summary of the history of the measure which Disraeli had cunningly prepared for the benefit of the malcontent Whigs:—

> "What, then, is the origin of this £7 Franchise Bill? The origin of it is this: that . . . . the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Mr. Gladstone] came down to the House one fine summer morning appropriated to one of those dreary debates on the £6 franchise to which we all look back with a feeling of horror—made a most remarkable speech, in which he established the franchise on the rights of man, and at the same time announced his conviction that the working classes of the country, on whom he pronounced a high panegyric, possessed no share, or only an infinitesimal share, of that franchise; the inevitable consequence being that a large measure should be brought forward, as an approximation to the rights of man, to confer the suffrage on the working classes. That speech was received with enthusiasm by a party in this House—not a numerous party, but represented by great talent—while among his followers are men of activity, intelligence, and experience in organisation. They have also a party in the country, not a contemptible party, though I think not a predominant party; and from that moment this party has been at work—working on the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—checked for a moment by the prudence of Lord Palmerston; but the moment he left us, instantly a new character was given to the Administration, and the consequence has been the measure we have now before us—a measure of piecemeal reform."*

Disraeli Alarms the Whigs.

It is quite true that Mr. Gladstone had introduced the subject as a branch of the rights of man. He had advocated the claim of working men on grounds of humanity. "Are they not our own flesh and blood?"

* Hansard, April 27th, 1866.

Such a principle was too large for the Bill. There was a dash of bathos in the contrast between pure flesh and blood and flesh and blood limited by a £7 qualification. Nevertheless Mr. Gladstone's speech introducing the measure was a fine example of lucid exposition. It was proposed, he said, to raise the constituency in England and Wales by 400,000 from 900,000 to 1,300,000 votes. The total number of adult males was 5,300,000, so that if the Bill were carried the proportion of the voters to the non-voters would be increased to, as nearly as possible, one in four. The legislative proposals by which this very modest extension was to be effected were recapitulated by Mr. Gladstone as follows:—

The Reform Bill of 1866.

"The first is to create an occupation franchise in counties, for houses alone or houses with land, beginning at £14 rental and reaching up to the present occupation franchise of £50. The second is to introduce into counties the provision that copyholders and leaseholders within Parliamentary boroughs shall be put upon the same footing as that in which freeholders in Parliamentary boroughs now stand for the purpose of county voting, without any alteration in the relative amounts of qualification for household and copyhold as compared with freehold.

"The third is a Savings Bank franchise, which will operate in both counties and towns, but which will, we think, have a more important operation in the counties.

"In towns we propose to place compound householders* on the same footing as rate-paying householders. We propose to abolish tax and ratepaying clauses.

"We propose to reduce £10 clear annual value to a £7 clear annual value, and to bring in the gross estimated rental taken from the rate-book as the measure of the value, thus *pro tanto* making the rate-book a register.

"We propose also to introduce a franchise on behalf of lodgers . . . the qualification for which will be the £10 clear annual value of apartments without reference to furniture.

"We propose to abolish the necessity in the case of registered voters for residence at the time of voting.

"And lastly . . . we propose to follow the example set us by the right hon. gentleman opposite and the Government of Lord Derby in 1859, and sustained and supported, I must say, by a great many authorities, to introduce a clause disabling from voting persons who are employed in Government yards while they continue to be so employed."

Mr. Gladstone urged that the Bill was liberal, moderate, and safe. Ministers had remembered that "the limbo of abortive creations was peopled with the skeletons of Reform Bills," and did not wish to add to the number of those unfortunate miscarriages. If they were accused of having done too little, their reply was that it would have been dangerous suddenly to invest the working classes with preponderating power. As for those "who have protested almost in principle" against the extension of the franchise downwards—

"I would beg them to consider what an immense value there is in the extension of the franchise for its own sake. Liberty is a thing which is good, not merely in its fruits, but in itself. This is what we constantly say in regard to English legislation, when we are told that affairs are managed more economically, more cleverly, more effectually in foreign countries. 'Yes,' we answer, 'but here they are managed freely; and in freedom, in the free discharge of political duties, there is an immense power both of discipline and of education for the people.'

* "The compound householders should be treated exactly like the ratepaying householders," for "it is perfectly certain as an economical truth that the rates upon the house, though paid in the first instance by the landlords, are ultimately and truly paid by the tenants."

"We have felt that to carry enfranchisement below the present line was essential; essential to character, essential to credit, essential to usefulness; essential to the character and credit not merely of the Government, not merely of the political party by which it has the honour to be represented, but of this House, and of the successive Parliaments and Governments who all stand pledged with respect to this question of the representation. We cannot consent to look upon this large addition, considerable although it may be, to the political power of the working classes of this country, as if it were an addition fraught with mischief and with danger. We cannot look, and we hope no man will look, upon it as some Trojan horse approaching the walls of the sacred city, and filled with armed men, bent upon ruin, plunder, and conflagration. We cannot join in comparing it with that *monstrum infelix;* we cannot say—

'. . . . Scandit fatalis machina muros,
Fœta armis: mediæque minans illabitur urbi.'

I believe that those persons whom we ask you to enfranchise ought rather to be welcomed as you would welcome recruits to your army, or children to your family. We ask you to give within what you consider to be the just limits of prudence and circumspection; but, having once determined those limits, to give with an ungrudging hand. Consider what you can safely and justly afford to do in admitting new subjects and citizens within the pale of the Parliamentary constitution; and, having so considered it, do not, I beseech you, perform the act as if you were compounding with danger and misfortune. Do it as if you were conferring a boon that will be felt and reciprocated in grateful attachment. Give to these persons new interests in the Constitution, new interests which, by the beneficent processes of the law of nature and of Providence, shall beget in them new attachment; for the attachment of the people to the Throne, the institutions, and the laws under which they live is, after all, more than gold and silver, more than fleets and armies, at once the strength, the glory, and the safety of the land."

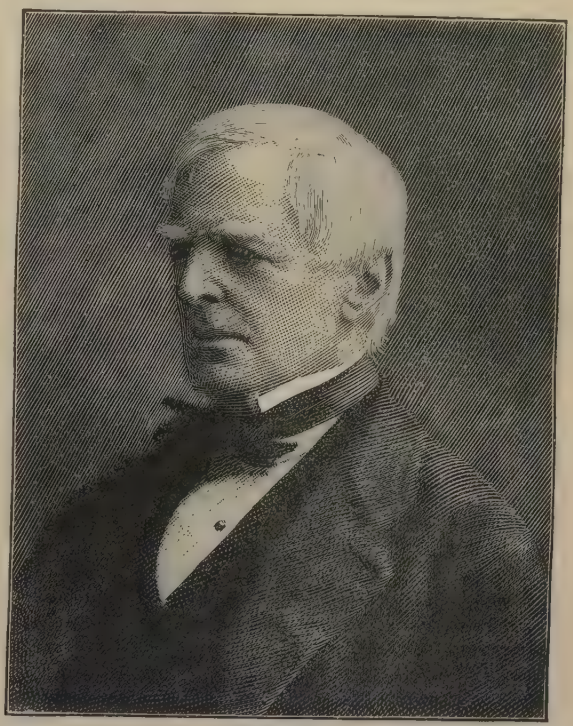


*Photo: Frudelle and Young, Regent Street.*
ROBERT LOWE (VISCOUNT SHERBROOKE).

The Bill was not favourably received. Sedition began at once in the Liberal ranks. Lowe commenced that famous series of speeches which placed him for a single session in the very first rank of Parliamentary debaters; and Horsman, though little better than a windbag, achieved for the time being a similar vogue. To Horsman belongs the distinction of priority—for he at once denounced the Bill as another political fraud and Parliamentary juggle; and the still greater distinction of eliciting from Bright what Mr. Gladstone regarded as among the most successful of Parliamentary witticisms.

**The Adullamites.**

Bright, who gave the Bill his support as a simple and honest, though inadequate measure, said that Horsman had—

"retired into what may be called his political Cave of Adullam, to which he invites everyone who is in distress, and everyone who is discontented. He has long been anxious to found a party in this House; and there is scarcely a member at this end of the House who is able to address us with effect, or to take much part, whom he has not tried to bring over to his party and his cabal. At last he has succeeded in hooking the right hon. gentleman the member for Calne [Lowe.] I know it was the opinion many years ago of a member of the Cabinet that two men could make a party. When a party is formed of two men so amiable and so disinterested as the two right hon. gentlemen, we may hope to see for the first time in Parliament a party perfectly harmonious and distinguished by mutual and unbroken trust. But there is one difficulty which it is impossible to remove. This party of two is like the Scotch terrier that was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail." *

Lowe followed in a masterly speech, in which he made great play with Mr. Gladstone's very infelicitous reference to the Trojan Horse.† It was disfigured, however, by a rather coarse attack upon the disfranchised working classes: "If you want venality, if you want ignorance, if you want drunkenness and facility for being intimidated . . . . do you go to the top or the bottom?" The debate on the second reading was postponed until April. In the Easter recess the Conservative party, meeting at the residence of Lord Salisbury, decided to oppose the Bill. On the other hand, some mass meetings were held in the country to support the Government, and at a great demonstration in Liverpool, on April 5th, Mr. Gladstone pledged Lord Russell and his colleagues to stand or fall by Reform. The constantly growing capacity of the working classes had come to constitute "not only a fitness but in a moral sense a right" to the franchise. The Government felt its responsibility, and Mr. Gladstone declared amid a scene of great enthusiasm—

Burning the Boats.

"We stake ourselves—we stake our existence as a Government—and we also stake our political character on the adoption of the Bill in its main provisions. You have a right to expect from us that we should tell you what we mean, and that the trumpet which it is our business to blow should give forth no uncertain sound. Its sound has not been, and, I trust, will not be, uncertain. We have passed the Rubicon—we have broken the bridge, and burned the boats behind us."

On the 12th of April Mr. Gladstone moved the Second Reading of the Bill in a closely reasoned speech of great eloquence. After exposing a tissue of falsehoods which had been put into print by a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, he showed the reasonableness of the claim of the working classes, who actually suffered from a smaller representation than had been accorded to them under the system that had prevailed before the Reform Act of 1832:—

"Neither must the House forget that since 1832 every kind of beneficial change has been in operation in favour of the working classes. There never was a period in which religious influences were more active than in the period I now name. It is hardly an exaggeration to

* Bishop Wilberforce wrote at the time about "Gladstone's new Commandment," which was, "Thou shalt not commit Adullamy."

† The quotation, it has been suggested, probably came into Mr. Gladstone's mind because it was in a part of the Æneid which he always knew by heart, having recited it as a boy at Eton on the Fourth of June.

say that since that period the civilising and training powers of education have been not so much improved, as I might almost say, brought into existence as far as the mass of the people is concerned. As regards the Press, an emancipation and an extension have taken place to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. I will not believe that the mass of gentlemen opposite are really insensible to the enormous benefit that has been effected by that emancipation of the Press, when for the humble sum of a penny, or for even less, newspapers are circulated from day to day by the million rather than by the thousand, in numbers almost defying the powers of statistics to follow, and carrying home to all classes of our fellow-countrymen accounts of public affairs, making them feel an interest in the transaction of those affairs, and containing articles which, I must say, are written in a spirit, with an ability, with a sound moral sense, and with a refinement that have made the penny Press of England the worthy companion—I may almost say the rival—of those dearer and older papers which have long secured for British journalism a renown perhaps without parallel in the world. By measures relating to labour, to police, and to sanitary arrangements, Parliament has been labouring, has been striving to raise the level of the working community, and has been so striving with admitted success. And there is not a call which has been made upon the self-improving powers of the working community which has not been fully answered.

"Take, for instance, the working men's free libraries and institutes throughout the country; take, as an example of the class, Liverpool. Who are the frequenters of that institute? I believe that the majority of the careful, honest, painstaking students who crowd that library are men belonging to the working classes, a large number of whom cannot attend without making some considerable sacrifice. Then again, Sir, we called upon them to be provident, we instituted for them Post-office Savings Banks, which may now be said to have been in full operation for four years; and what has been the result? . . . There are now 650,000 depositors in those Savings Banks. . . . Parliament has been striving to make them fitter and fitter for the franchise; and can anything be more unwise and more senseless than to persevere from year to year in this plan and then blindly to refuse to recognise its legitimate upshot—namely, the increased fitness of the working classes for the exercise of political power? The proper exercise of that power depends upon the fitness of those who are to receive it. That fitness you increase from day to day, and yet you decline, when the fitness is admitted, to give the power."

Mr. Gladstone tried to keep the Trojan Horse on all fours, and carried the war into the enemy's country by impeaching an analogy which Lowe had drawn from Herodotus and the Hyperboreans. Lowe, replying on April 26th, the seventh night of the debate, made another brilliant speech, in which he argued that, on Mr. Gladstone's principles, since all were of one "flesh and blood," this Bill would lead to the enfranchisement of all. He added "one more excerpt" from the story of the poor old Trojan Horse, after which he promised that the noble animal should be "turned out to grass for the remainder of its life."

This debate, among the greatest in our Parliamentary annals, and, in spite of classical quotation, one of the most passionate—for Disraeli's imperturbable coolness only inflamed the vehemence of his great rival—was concluded on the morning of April 20th. Disraeli made a last insidious appeal to the prejudices of the Whigs and weak-kneed Liberals. He taunted the Chancellor of the Exchequer with his "pilgrimages of passion," and with his speech at the Oxford Union Society in 1832,* and accused him of having become a confederate of Bright for the purpose of "Americanising" our institutions. What would be the sequel to this Bill if passed?—

**Disraeli's Final Speech.**

"There will be no charm of tradition; no prescriptive spell; no families of historic

* See p. 130.

lineage; none of those great estates round which men rally when liberty is assailed; no statesmanship; no eloquence; no learning; no genius. Instead of these you will have a horde of selfish and obscure mediocrities, incapable of anything but mischief, and that mischief devised and regulated by the raging demagogue of the hour."

The "Banner" Speech.

Rising at one o'clock in the morning to wind-up the debate, Mr. Gladstone touched, in two famous passages, the high-water mark of his impetuous eloquence. In the first of these he spoke of his relation to the Liberal party; and it is surely wonderful that, with his leadership scarcely established, when a great majority was melting away before his eyes, when he could not but be conscious of the malice of inferior rivals, when he could not but be stung by the defection of men on whose support he might fairly have counted, at such a time and under such a strain the torrent of eloquence should have been directed by a sense, not of the perfidy of the few, but of the loyalty of the many.

"My position, Sir, in regard to the Liberal party, is in all points the opposite of Earl Russell's. . . . I have none of the claims he possesses. I came among you an outcast from those with whom I associated, driven from them, I admit, by no arbitrary act, but by the slow and resistless forces of conviction. I came among you, to make use of the legal phraseology, *in formâ pauperis*. I had nothing to offer you but faithful and honourable service. You received me, as Dido received the shipwrecked Æneas—

'. . . Ejectum littore, egentem
Excepi,'

and I only trust you may not hereafter at any time have to complete the sentence in regard to me—

'Et regni, demens, in parte locavi.'

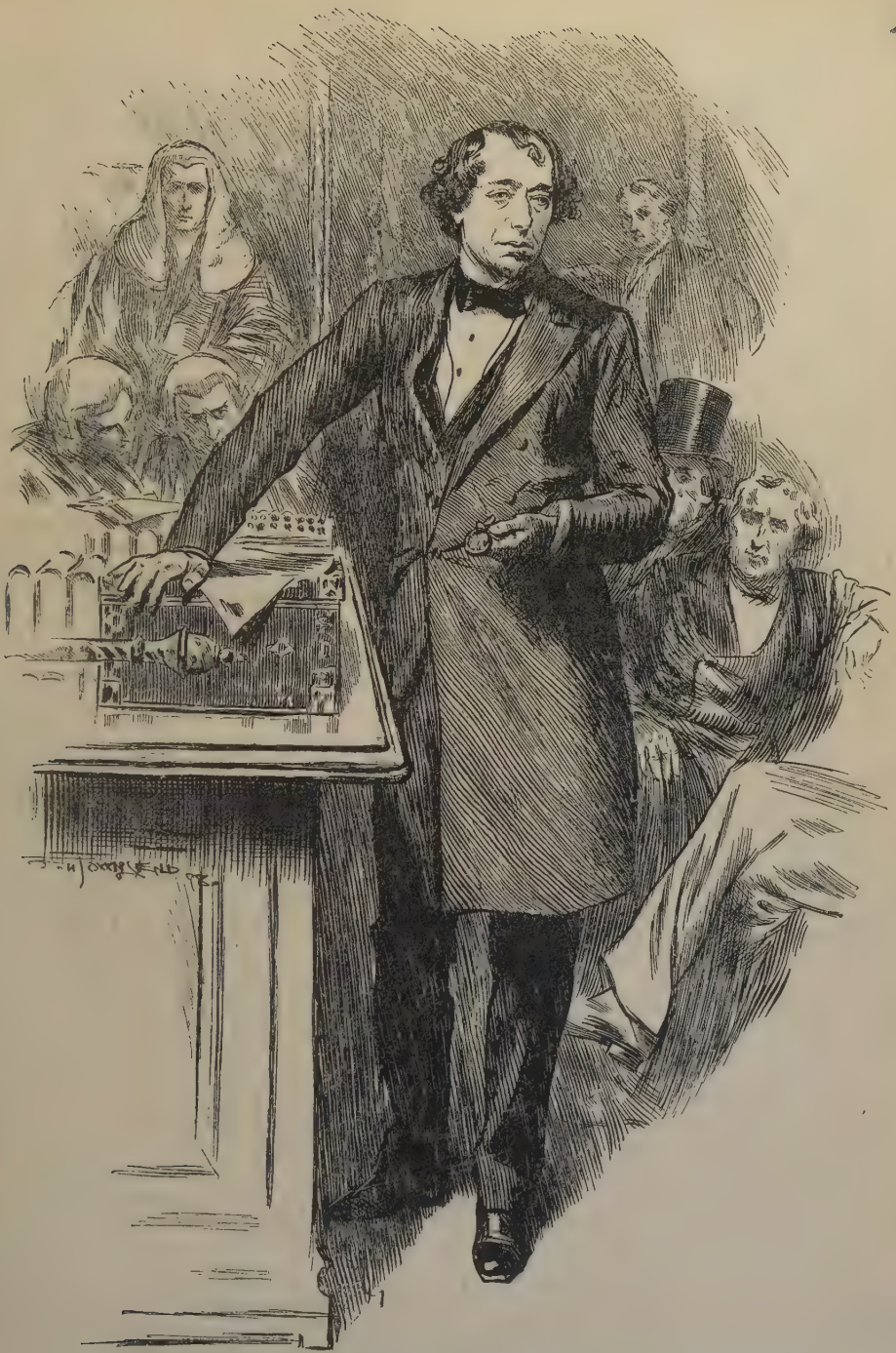
You received me with kindness, indulgence, generosity, and I may even say with some measure of confidence. And the relation between us has assumed such a form that you can never be my debtors, but that I must for ever be in your debt."

The note of apology and gratitude for the past is quickly followed by the note of defiance for the present, and of confidence in the future:—

"But, Sir, we are assailed; this Bill is in a state of crisis and of peril, and the Government along with it. We stand or fall with it, as has been declared by my noble friend Lord Russell. We stand with it now; we may fall with it a short time hence. If we do so fall, we, or others in our places, shall rise with it hereafter. I shall not attempt to measure with precision the forces that are to be arrayed against us in the coming issue. Perhaps the great division of to-night is not the last that must take place in the struggle. At some point of the contest, you may possibly succeed. You may drive us from our seats. You may bury the Bill that we have introduced, but we will write upon its gravestone for an epitaph this line, with certain confidence in its fulfilment—

'Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.'

You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great social forces are against you; they are marshalled on our side; and the banner which we now carry in this fight, though perhaps at some moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet it soon again will float in the eye of Heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not far distant victory."



DISRAELI WINDING-UP THE DEBATE FOR THE OPPOSITION.

The division was taken amid a scene of tremendous excitement, and when the figures, giving a bare majority of five for the Government, were announced, the joy of the Tories and their Adullamite allies was loud and demonstrative. Lowe waved his hat in triumphant circles, and a spectator noticed that his white hair shone brighter than silver, and that his complexion had deepened into something like "bishop's purple."

The Division.

Two minor incidents may be added to what has been said about this remarkable debate. The first illustrates the sharpness of the rivalry between the two great leaders who were now beginning to cross swords on an equal footing. Mr. Gladstone had drawn an argument from the more democratic municipal franchise, in which the working men numbered 224,000. Was not that a dreadful state of things? "Yet there had been no explosion of class feeling, nor any attempt to confiscate property, nor any fulfilment of the terrible evils predicted by the Conservative party in 1835, the party who occupied the seats of hon. gentlemen opposite."

Here Disraeli interposed: "Where were you sitting then?"

Mr. Gladstone: "If such questions are relevant to the matter in hand, I was sitting on the benches of that party; but I was not one of those who supported the argument. Where was the right hon. gentleman sitting at that time? He was not sitting, indeed, for he did not sit at all; but he was standing somewhere or other in the interests of the 'Mountain,' far above the benches behind me."

The other incident is related by the late Sir William Gregory, member for Galway—a brilliant Adullamite:—

"On the 21st of April Mr. Gladstone made his magnificent speech on the second reading of the Reform Bill, and stigmatised that portion of the Liberal party who were about to vote for Lord Grosvenor's amendment as 'depraved little men.' 'Yes,' added he, laughingly, 'and παρακεκομμένα ("crooked") also.' The same evening, at Lady Waldegrave's party, he came up to me and said, 'It quite gave me pleasure, when we were dividing, to think I had in the other Lobby a sympathiser in one respect, in love and remembrance of Aristophanes.' I replied, 'I was so pleased at hearing an old friend quoted, that I did not mind the delinquencies you imputed to us; but I hardly think the word παρακεκομμένα is well expressed by "crooked"; I believe it refers to coins "badly struck."' To this he assented, but insisted that 'crooked' conveyed the meaning."

A few days later, when the political excitement was still intense, the doorkeeper put into Gregory's hands the following letter from Mr. Gladstone:—

"April 30th, '66.

"DEAR MR. GREGORY,—I thought a little about the proper mode of rendering the word παρακεκομμένα, and it appeared to me that the term best fitted to convey the meaning was 'misbegotten,' corresponding closely as it does with 'mis-struck,' or 'struck awry,' the meaning of the Greek word in its first intention. But such a translation was evidently inadmissible, so I adopted one which was simple, and seemed near enough to the mark. I am open to your criticism, but I beg you to believe I did not proceed in the matter lightly, and that I am aware of the responsibility of attempting in any way to represent or render Aristophanes." *

There were only two courses left open to a Government pledged to Reform. It must resign or persist in endeavouring to carry its scheme.

* Autobiography of Sir William Gregory, pp. 244, 245.

The second alternative was adopted, and for a time all went well. A Redistribution Bill was passed without opposition. Several amendments were defeated, withdrawn, or accepted. But the struggle was inglorious if not humiliating; and when an amendment proposed by Lord Dunkellin, which substituted rating for rental as the basis for the borough franchise, was carried, the Government determined to resign.

At first the Queen refused to accept the resignation of her Ministers, feeling that a change would be dangerous on the eve of a war between Austria and Prussia. But Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone were resolved that resignation was the only honourable course, though they did not recommend a dissolution, on account of "the apathy of the south of England" on the subject of Reform. They decided upon retirement, because they could only remain in office by yielding, and if they yielded they would "incur just reproach on the part of the public as having abandoned their principles and forsaken their measures on light and insufficient ground."* The fall of the Ministry seems to have at last roused the Londoners. Meetings were held in Trafalgar Square, and on June 28th thousands of Reformers marched in procession to Mr. Gladstone's house in Carlton House Terrace. Mr. Gladstone was absent, but Mrs. Gladstone and other members of the family appeared on the terrace, not, as the *Times* suggested, to "receive an ovation" from "persons of the lowest class," but at the request of some police officers, who thought that if they would appear the crowd would disperse quietly and rapidly.†

**Resignation of Earl Russell's Government, 1866.**

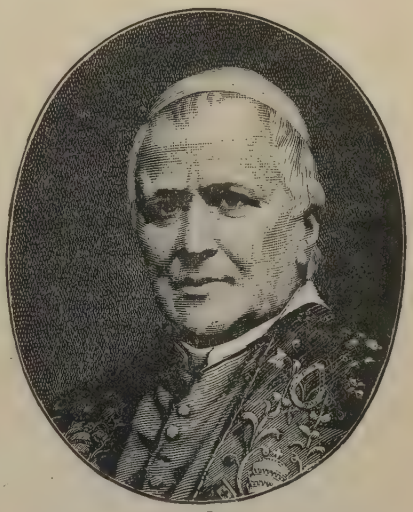


*Photo: Pierre Petit, Paris.*
POPE PIUS IX.

In October and November Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone were in Rome. Manning got wind of the visit, and wrote to Mgr. Talbot:—

"Gladstone is coming to Rome in October; *show him all the kindness you can.* I am anxious about him. He has been driven and goaded into extremes, and may become very dangerous. But for a long time he has been silent about Rome and the Temporal Power. And he has been helping us. He stayed till two or three in the morning to support our clause for the workhouse children at my request, and would have spoken if there had been need."

* *Cf.* Walpole's Life of Earl Russell, vol. ii., p. 414. In another letter to the Queen, dated June 9th, Lord Russell said he "would ill serve your Majesty's interests and those of the country if, by any premature concession, he were to expose his own character and that of Mr. Gladstone to the loss of public confidence." After his resignation Lord Russell began to withdraw from political life.

† Letter from Mr. Gladstone to the *Daily News*, June 30th 1866.

And again,

"Gladstone is *much* softened. He fully holds that the Holy Father must be *independent*. But his head is full of schemes. I think he will do nothing *hostile*. Towards us in England and towards Ireland he is the most just and fargoing of all our public men." *

Grotesque accounts of conversations with the Pope during this visit to Rome were published by the *Corriere Italiano* and other newspapers. The temporal power of the Pope was already tottering, and it was said that Mr. Gladstone had sympathetically discussed the various places—

PULLING DOWN THE HYDE PARK RAILINGS.

including Ireland—where the Pope might find refuge if driven from the Vatican. These absurd reports were denied at the time and forgotten: but when two years later Mr. Gladstone proposed to disestablish the Irish Church he found it necessary again to deny publicly "that when at Rome I made arrangements with the Pope to destroy the Church Establishment in Ireland, with some other like matters, being myself a Roman Catholic at heart."

**An Interview with the Pope, 1866.**

Three other Cabinet Ministers were in Rome, and had audiences with

* Mr. Purcell's Life of Manning, vol. ii., p. 378. There had been a renewal of intercourse between Gladstone and Manning in 1861.

the Pope. So had Mr. Gladstone, seated on a stool in front of his Holiness. The Pope is believed to have collated his impressions afterwards as follows:—

He liked but did not understand Mr. Gladstone.
He understood but did not like Mr. Cardwell.
He liked and understood Lord Clarendon.
He neither liked nor understood the Duke of Argyll.

Lord Derby was now Prime Minister, but Disraeli was the leading spirit in what followed. He saw that the agitation in London and the great towns of the North was a real agitation, and he felt convinced that Reform could not be long postponed. Now that the Hyde Park railings had been pulled down, why should not Reform be carried by the Tories? Only a man whose political conscience was a blank could have tried; only a man whose political courage was an unlimited quantity could have succeeded. Divested of the one and invested with the other, Disraeli usurped Radicalism, dished Whiggism, and educated Toryism. From that time the Conservative party, having, in Lord Cranborne's words, "borrowed the ethics of the political adventurer," and having learned at the appropriate moment to sink its prejudices, ceased to be "stupid." Mr. Gladstone was unprepared for this sudden piece of strategy, and during the whole session of 1867, he was, comparatively speaking, under a cloud, appalled by his rival's successful audacity, "awed by his diabolical cleverness." Besides, as Lord Houghton pointed out, the fall of the Ministry had been a genuine collapse; and the "real fervour of conviction" which Mr. Gladstone had shown, though it had won him the attachment of 300 men in the House of Commons, had inspired horror among the historical and retrospective Liberals. Therefore, so long as the Reform question remained, Disraeli could not be said to have been governing with a minority; and as the Reform "Resolutions" with which he opened the session of 1867 were of a perfectly innocuous type, and as the "Ten Minutes" Bill which was substituted, under pressure, was at first mild and intricate and unworkable, the leader contrived to let his followers down gradually. Of the first proposals Mr. Gladstone afterwards said (at Liverpool, October 14th, 1868) that they would actually have "narrowed and lowered" the influence of the working classes. "True 100,000 working men would have been enfranchised; but there was another provision, under the name of the dual vote, which would have "doubled in the middle and wealthier classes of this country the votes of 300,000 persons." Disraeli's great object was to pass such a Reform Bill as would be a useful advertisement for himself and his party at the General Election, which could not be far distant; and for this purpose it was essential to agree with the majority.

"Dishing" the Whigs, 1867.

A biography which attempted to enter into the details of the session of 1867 would probably be tedious and certainly inaccurate. In any case, Disraeli played the first part. He was the obliging manager. It was not a question which should "decide the fate of Ministries;" it was "not for the weal of England that this settlement should be delayed." Accordingly, when Mr. Gladstone described the system of checks and "fancy franchises" as a system of frauds, Disraeli genially invited the Opposition to reform his Reform Bill—"act with us cordially and candidly; you will find on our side complete reciprocity of feeling." Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone

were positively alarmed at the facilities offered. The former recalled a saying that "the concessions of the Whigs, which were once concessions to intelligence, were now concessions to ignorance"; and even Mr. Gladstone noted with alarm, when the Bill reached its final shape, that a few thousand agricultural labourers would be enfranchised under it! * When the Bill went into Committee, Mr. Gladstone proposed to bind the Committee by Instructions. Forty or fifty Liberals and Radicals, including Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff and Professor Fawcett, objected to the policy, and formed a Cave which was compared to the cave of the Adullamites. In consequence, Mr. Gladstone threatened to withdraw from the leadership, though he would still be ready to serve when a suitable occasion presented itself. But the Tea-room party, as they were called, had a very bad time of it, and soon repented of their independence. On the 22nd of April Mr. Bright spoke out on the subject at Birmingham:—

Mr. Bright and the Tea-room Party.

"I will venture to say this, that since 1832 there has been no man of the official rank or class who has imported into this question of Reform so much of earnestness, so much of zeal, as has been imported during the last two years by the present leader of the Liberal party. Who is there in the House of Commons who equals him in the knowledge of all political questions? Who equals him in earnestness? Who equals him in eloquence? If these gentlemen, who say they will not follow him, have anyone who is equal, let them show him. If they can point out any statesman who can add dignity and grandeur to the stature of Mr. Gladstone, let them produce him."

He compared the action of the Tea-room party to that of a costermonger and a donkey upsetting a great express train, and treated it as a revival of the conspiracy which had thrown out the Liberal Government and "an honest and an acceptable Bill." In a few days Mr. Gladstone was persuaded that he was the real and only leader of the Liberal party. From that time there was no open mutiny.

As the spring advanced the debates became warmer and warmer. In May that difficult and mysterious personage, the Compound Householder, made his appearance again. On the 11th of that month Mr. Gladstone made an angry speech to a provincial deputation about "the absurd, preposterous, and mischievous distinctions of personal rating" contained in the Bill. If they were carried he, for his part, would not passively accept the law, but would endeavour by all legitimate means to alter it. Disraeli referred to this in the House by an allusion to "spouters of stale sedition." However, Mr. Gladstone had his way. In spite of Lowe's desperate appeal to "the gentlemen of England with their ancestry behind them and their posterity before them," personal payment of rates, the last "principle" upon which Disraeli pretended to stand, was practically abolished. The change came about as follows. The Liberals had been denouncing the refusal of a vote to the compounders as a thing almost too wicked for words. Ministers were equally emphatic and apparently equally determined that the one principle which they had not abandoned should be maintained. One night the House had emptied,

The Compound Householder again.

* The Reform Bill of 1867, carried without any mandate from the country, is certainly a good illustration of the valuelessness of the House of Lords as a check upon constitutional changes.

as usual, at the dinner hour. Mr. Disraeli rose at about nine o'clock. There seemed, he said, to be a difference of opinion as to whether compound householders should have votes. He himself had no strong views, but the Opposition, it appeared, had. The question was of little importance, and for the sake of expediting his Bill he was quite ready to accommodate the Opposition. About an hour later the House began to fill. Most people were highly amused by the way in which Mr. Disraeli had thrown over his colleagues. Not so Mr. Gladstone. He was furiously indignant, and thundered at Disraeli's ignorance of his own Bill.*

**The Reform Bill Passed, 1867.**

On July 15th, after bitter and indignant speeches from Cranborne and Lowe, the Reform Bill passed its Third Reading and a month later received the Royal Assent. For the time being Disraeli was triumphant; and he is said to have boasted that he would "hold down" his rival "for twenty years." For the next few months, indeed, Mr. Gladstone was comparatively subdued. On August 8th he wrote to a correspondent in New York admitting that his attitude had been wrong in the struggle between North and South; "yet the motive was not bad."

WERNETH MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, OLDHAM.

Parliament assembled on November 19th on account of a proposed Abyssinian expedition. The agitation in Ireland, was again becoming very dangerous, and Mr. Gladstone asked for a declaration of policy on the subject of Irish Land Tenure. He also questioned the employment of Indian troops in Abyssinia. But Mrs. Disraeli was very ill, and Mr. Gladstone chivalrously abstained from political hostilities. He was already preparing, however, for a new and victorious campaign. The first note was struck on December 18th, when he opened a mechanics' institute at Werneth, a suburb of Oldham, and made three speeches on that one day. An address was presented to him by the mayor, aldermen,

**Speeches in Lancashire, 1867.**

* *Cf.*, for the history of the 1867 Reform Bill, Mr. Gladstone's speech at Liverpool October 14th, 1868. Mr. Gladstone carried out his views completely in 1869 by the Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Act (32 and 33 Vict., c. 41).

and burgesses, putting education, the condition of Ireland, and national expenditure as the foremost questions. As to Ireland Mr. Gladstone said: "We must not get on the high horse and say we will entertain no questions with regard to the measures of relief until what is called Fenianism is extinguished. No; when you attack social evils, don't attack them in their manifestations, but attack them in their roots and in their causes." The increase of expenditure was to be deplored and resisted, "because public economy is associated with public virtue, and because extravagance in public establishments is associated with bribery and the extension of political vices." As to education, he said, speaking in the evening, that he entertained a sanguine hope that "what we called the religious difficulty," which stood in the way of an extension of popular education, "might be got over." He would not discuss in detail the means by which "an equal system" might be formed, but expressed the opinion that a Bill introduced in the previous year by Bruce and Forster, further considered and matured, would offer a practical basis on which they might hope to proceed.

Many disclosures damaging to Trades Unions had been made before Commissioners recently appointed. Mr. Gladstone told the people of Oldham that he would speak out freely on the subject. "The name of trades unions has within the last six or twelve months come under a shade darker than any that has rested upon it for a long time." In the first place, he laid it down as a principle that the association of working men in general is desirable—much was to be said for it and nothing against. But what of strikes? A strike, he said, involves interference with contracts and diminishes the total fund of wealth for distribution. On the other hand, it might increase the working man's share of that fund; and it was in one way "of enormous advantage to society," because "of all the stimulants and incentives to amendments in machinery, none are equal to strikes. . . . Finally, I think every sensible man will feel, as it used to be said of competition in railways, by making new lines, that the threat of competition was better in many respects than the making of new lines, so it may be that the threat and the fear of a strike will do more good than a strike, and lead to mutual concessions which the strike itself would fail to achieve."

**Trades Unions.**

With rules in restraint of industry Mr. Gladstone dealt in a very summary fashion. "I shall venture to say with great deference, but with great confidence, that all rules in restraint of labour and industry made by any union, association, or authority whatever are bad from beginning to end." He gave as instances rules prohibiting women and children from competing with men, rules limiting apprentices, and rules prohibiting piecework. In short—

**Rules in Restraint of Industry.**

"The whole attempt to reduce labour to a uniform standard,* to make all men equal, to bring the good labourer down to the level—I won't say of the worst, but of the middling labourer—is the greatest injury that the worst enemy of the labouring class could wish to have inflicted upon it. The best condition of things for the labouring classes is that in

* It was pointed out to Mr. Gladstone afterwards that a minimum need not mean a uniform rate of wages.

which it shall be easiest for the able or the diligent man to rise out of them. That is the state of things most honourable to the labouring classes; and that is the state of things that will keep life and warmth and vigour and energy, and the spirit of progress, of improvement, of duty and of honourable competition alive among its members."

Mr. Gladstone welcomed every extension of machinery. He liked to hear of orders being sent abroad, because we should never get on if foreign nations did not keep "treading on our heels." It was a speech of remarkable courage. Seldom does a democratic leader on the eve of a great campaign think it his duty to convey an unpalatable warning to a large section of newly enfranchised voters.

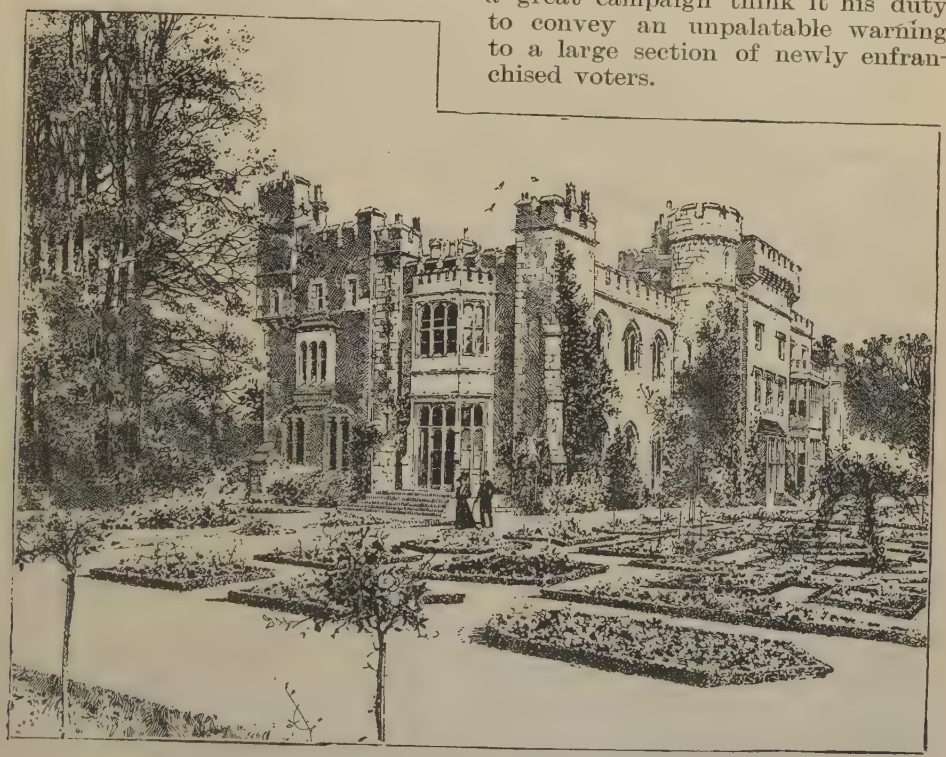


*Photo: G. W. Wilson and Co., Aberdeen.*

HAWARDEN CASTLE, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

Mr. Gladstone spent the Christmas at Hawarden. As he was watching the felling of a tree a splinter flew into his eye, causing for some time much pain and inconvenience. By the 3rd of February, 1868, however, he was able to give the villagers a Penny Reading from Sir Walter Scott.

On January 14th, 1868, a meeting of trades unionists was held at Bell Inn, Old Bailey, to consider Mr. Gladstone's speech at Oldham and some correspondence arising out of it. Mr. Gladstone had offered "either to receive and consider any written document in answer to what I have said, or to hear any arguments from persons who might be appointed by such a meeting as is intended, and freely to converse with them in a friendly spirit as

**Action of Trades Unionists, 1868.**

men who have a common object in view, under the condition, however, that they would be good enough to select and state those propositions of mine which they might consider to call for animadversion." He denied having made any speech "denunciatory of trades unions"; indeed, at Oldham he had stated that "unions of working men were rather to be commended than otherwise." The meeting decided that it was most important that all misunderstandings should be removed between themselves and the leader of the Liberal party. "Erroneous" was therefore substituted for "denunciatory," and it was agreed that a deputation should be selected to interview Mr. Gladstone. Eight delegates were chosen, among them Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. George Potter, and the meeting took place on Tuesday, February 18th. But the artisans who had come to instruct Mr. Gladstone found that they were mere children in his hands. Even on questions relating solely to trades unions, Mr. Gladstone seemed to be teacher rather than pupil. One passage in the discussion excited great attention. Mr. Gladstone said:—

A Deputation to Mr. Gladstone.

"I believe there are rules among masons to the effect that the stone which is quarried may not be 'dressed,' as it is called, in the quarry itself, but must be taken to the place where it is put in the building. Now, is it possible as a matter of reason to denounce too strongly such a rule as that? It is a rule worthy of savages. There was nothing in the Corn Law a bit worse than that. It is waste of human labour. It is refusing to make God's gifts go as far as He intended them when you require labour to be done in accordance with such a useless regulation. I do not know whether that is a trade union regulation or not." (Mr. Potter and some other members of the deputation, "No.") "I am glad to hear it."

It turned out that this was a regulation made by a number of local branches, and affecting 18,000 or 20,000 masons, so that Mr. Gladstone was substantially right. The incident, which was reported in the daily press, illustrates, if it did not actually prompt, a witticism which has been ascribed to Robert Lowe and also—very much less plausibly—to Mr. Gladstone himself: "Deputation is a noun of multitude, signifying many but not signifying much."

The delegates went away greatly pleased with their reception. "Mr. Gladstone," said Mr. Potter, a few days afterwards, "had met the deputation like a statesman, and had stated his own views in an honest and straightforward manner." On one point Mr. Gladstone gave complete satisfaction. "I have not a word to say," he declared, "against regulations imposed with a view to the preservation of health and social considerations."

Mr. Gladstone was now not only the real but also the titular leader of the Liberal party. Lord Russell had formally announced his resignation at Christmas. Mr. Gladstone expressed his attachment and regard in an affectionate and courtly letter: "So long as you have been ready to lead I have been ready and glad to follow. . . . I trust the remainder of my political life, which I neither expect nor desire to be very long, may be passed in efforts which may have your countenance and approval." At the end of February Lord Derby resigned the Premiership, and Disraeli was sent for by the Queen and at once formed an Administration. Thus the two great contemporaries, natural opponents, born leaders, became almost simultaneously, by an appropriate coincidence,

the formal and acknowledged rulers of the two great parties into which the English political world tends and wishes to be divided. The comment of Lord Chelmsford—who, as Mr. Russell observes,* had been "abruptly dismissed" from the Chancellorship by Disraeli—upon the new Ministry was very brief. "The old Government was the Derby; this the Hoax." The Rivals Face to Face.

Mr. Gladstone, however, was not long to be "hoaxed" or "held down." He was consolidating his forces for a grand attack. On March 18th the signal was given by an outburst of social activity. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone entertained a distinguished company at Carlton House Terrace and afterwards held a large reception, which was attended by the Premier and Mrs. Disraeli. On the following afternoon the Duke of Argyll, Earl Granville, Chichester Fortescue, Brand, Bright, Cardwell, and a few others met at their leader's house to discuss the future policy of the Liberal party. Preparing for a Spring.

The result of this consultation was soon to appear. On February 19th a Church Rates Abolition Bill, introduced by Mr. Gladstone, had been read a second time after an important speech from its promoter, in which he hinted his conviction that the Irish Establishment had completed its term. On March 16th, in a debate on the state of Ireland, he was more explicit; for he expressly referred to his speech on Mr. Dillwyn's motion in 1865, and reaffirmed the opinion then for the first time expressed in public—that the Irish church "as a State Church," must cease to exist. And he added eloquently— The Irish Establishment Doomed.

"If we be prudent men, I hope we shall endeavour, so far as in us lies, to make some provision for the contingencies of a doubtful and possibly dangerous future. If we be chivalrous men, I trust we shall endeavour to wipe away the stains which the civilised world has for ages seen, or seemed to see, on the shield of England in her treatment of Ireland. If we be compassionate men, I hope we shall now, once for all, listen to the tale of woe which comes from her, and the reality of which, if not its justice, is testified by the continuous migration of her people—that we shall endeavour to

'Raze out the written troubles from her brain,
Pluck from her memory the rooted sorrow.'

But, above all, if we be just men, we shall go forward in the name of truth and right, bearing this in mind—that when the case is proved, and the hour is come, justice delayed is justice denied."

On March 23rd, after his consultation with the leading members of the party, Mr. Gladstone gave notice of three Resolutions, the first declaring the necessity for the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the second the expediency of suspending the exercise of public patronage in connection with the same, and the third praying that her Majesty would be graciously disposed to place at the disposal of Parliament her interest in the temporalities of the Irish Church. It is amusing to trace Disraeli's contortions. Should he accept the new policy and earn the friendship of Rome, or appeal to Protestant prejudices? He must "quiz" the Irish crisis somehow. Bright compared him to Addison's mountebank, who offered to sell pills to the country people which would be very good against earthquakes. But when almost simultaneously the Roman Catholics refused The Three Resolutions, 1868.

* Life of Mr. Gladstone, p. 196.

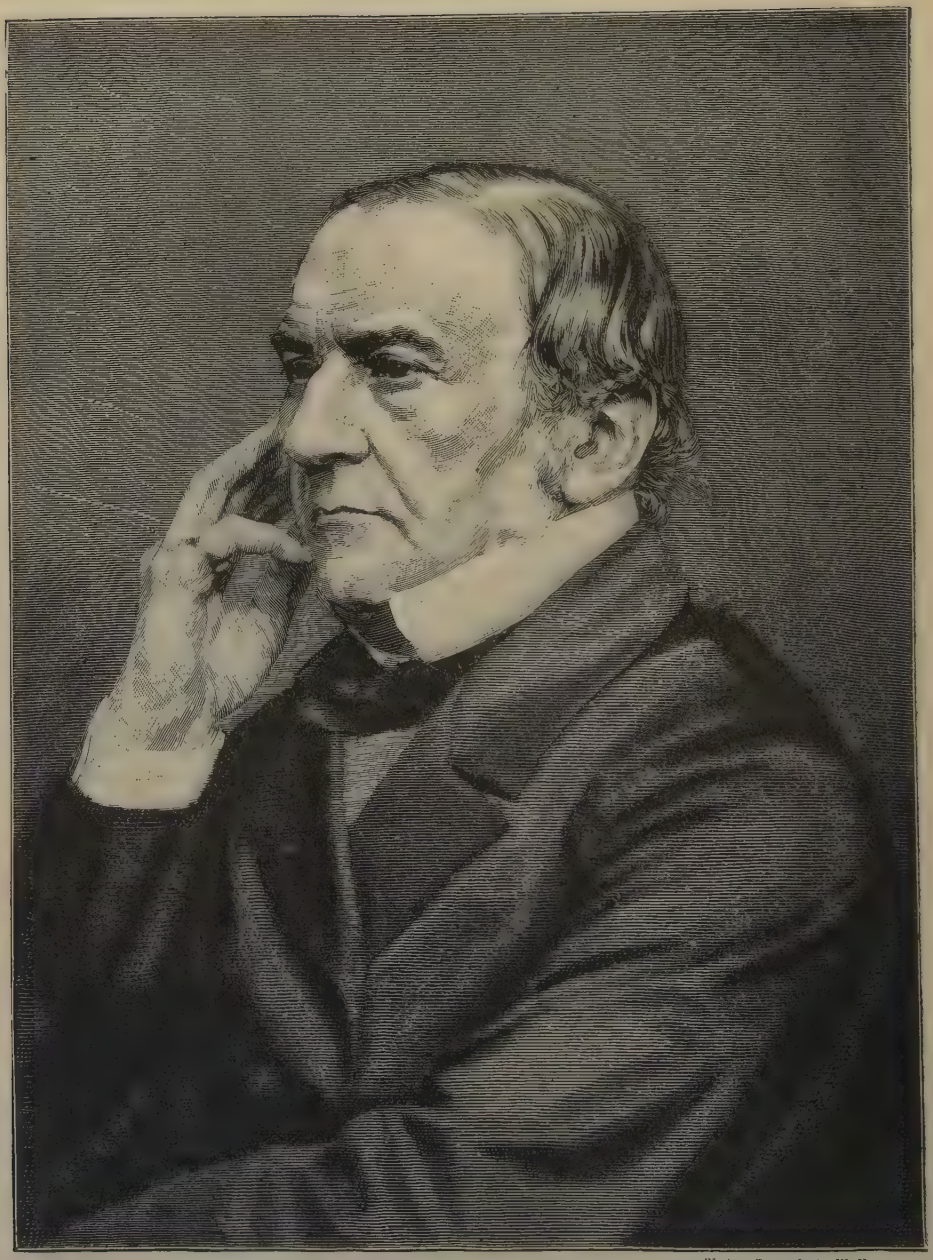


*Photo: Samuel A. Walker.*

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1868.

his offers and his enemy came out of ambush, Disraeli had to declare himself against Disestablishment; and a mild amendment to Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions was entrusted to Lord Stanley, son of the ex-Premier, and Foreign Secretary.

On March 30th the debate began. Mr. Gladstone first asked that the Resolutions be read, and then spoke eloquently for an hour and a half on the failure of the Irish Establishment.* Disraeli's reply was very feeble, but one sentence indicates the quarter in which, after balancing chances, he had determined to look for votes:—"The High Church Ritualists and the followers of the Pope have been long in secret combination, and are now in open confederacy." The policy was amplified in an elaborate letter dated "Hughenden Manor, Maundy Thursday." But Mr. Gladstone's optimism was justified and his opportunism successful. The attack upon the Irish Church recalled the Whigs and wavering Liberals. Lowe, "emerging from his cave or some more cynical habitation," made a vigorous speech in favour of the Resolutions, and Lord Russell, waiving his preference for concurrent endowment, gave them his moral support. Stanley's amendment was defeated by 331–270, and the first of the Resolutions carried by 330 to 265. Disraeli refused to resign, saying that he had advised the Queen to dissolve Parliament in the autumn. Meanwhile, to the intense indignation of Mr. Gladstone, he proposed to continue in office. Mr. Gladstone was full of confidence, and had already begun to work out the details of a measure, as a published letter to Lord Westbury clearly shows.

**The First Resclution Passed.**

The Government suffered defeats almost daily. Mr. Gladstone's Suspensory Bill, to prevent for a limited time any new appointments in the Church of Ireland, passed the House of Commons, but was thrown out by 192 votes to 97 in the House of Lords, and the door was thus opened to ecclesiastical jobbery. It was not Mr. Gladstone's fault that during its last days the Church which he had set himself to purify was allowed to forget the æther in order to choke itself in dust and bury itself in the earth.

**The Suspensory Bill.**

Disraeli's idea of giving a charter to a Roman Catholic University in Ireland had been hastily dropped. It had offended friends without propitiating enemies. The success of the Abyssinian Expedition was the one bright spot on the Ministerial horizon, and even that was spoiled by stagy extravagance. Napier, said Disraeli, had hoisted the standard of St. George upon the mountains of Rasselas, and had "led the elephants of Asia bearing the artillery of Europe over broken passes which might have startled the trapper and appalled the hunter of the Alps." Tawdry braggadocio! Yet this, with a tasteless affectation of royal favour, was all that Disraeli had to furnish him against the coming elections. On July 31st the last Parliament elected under the Reform Bill of 1832 was prorogued, and the Golden Age of Liberalism began to dawn.

**Parliament Dissolved, 1868.**

F. W. HIRST.

* For the peroration see pp. 503–4.

MET BOROUGH OF POPLAR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

# CHAPTER XII.

## MR. GLADSTONE AS AN ORATOR.

Mr. Gladstone's First Budget Speech—Some Specimens of his Eloquence—His Retirement in 1875—His Intervention in the Public Worship Regulation Bill Debates—Turning upon Sir William Harcourt—A Reminiscence of 1877: A Supreme Oratorical Triumph—The High-Water Mark of Mr. Gladstone's Oratory: The Bradlaugh Debates—The Speeches Introducing the Home Rule Bills—Piloting the Second Bill through Committee—"Drawing Gladstone"—His Magnanimity—Bantering Mr. Chamberlain—His Memorial Eloquence—His Last Speech in the House—His Eloquence compared with Pitt's—His Action—His Sarcasm—Lashing Mr. Chaplin—Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright Compared as Orators—Mr. Gladstone's Superiority to all Rivals—His Delightful *Causeries*—A Master of Every Weapon of Parliamentary Warfare.

RARELY in biographical history is it possible to trace the career of a great orator to the springing board of a particular speech. It has been shown how the fame of Mr. Gladstone's speech on the Reform Bill of 1832, delivered before the Oxford Union, filled all the colleges; how, report of it being carried to Clumber, the Duke of Newcastle made a note of so promising a young man, and when the General Election ensued, his Grace "selected" him—Mr. Gladstone, even in 1832, was nice in his distinction of words, and would not admit "nominated"—as candidate for his pocket borough Newark.

The attention Mr. Gladstone commanded in the mimic senate of Oxford was instantly bestowed upon him at Westminster. The long-accepted assertion that his maiden speech was on the question of slave labour in the West Indies is disposed of in an earlier chapter. Nevertheless, the speech delivered on the 3rd of June, 1833, on the slave question, being a more elaborate performance, and dealing with a larger subject, seems to have obscured memory of the earlier effort even among contemporaries present at both. It was followed in rapid succession by others dealing with the topics of the day. His speech in the Don Pacifico debate, in the session of 1850, planted his steadily advancing footsteps in the first rank of Parliamentary orators and debaters. It is curious to observe how then, as in later years, he set himself to wrestle with what was not yet known as the "jingo" spirit. A further coincidence to be noted in this speech is his use of the phrase Peace with Dignity, which many years after found perhaps unconscious echo in the more famous phrase Peace with Honour.

Mr. Gladstone's first Budget speech, forerunner of a series whose brilliancy was equalled only by the substantial benefits accruing to the nation from the schemes they unfolded, was delivered on the 18th of April, 1853. It was a masterly, far-reaching scheme, dealing out boons to all classes by the magic manipulation of what at the outset was a trifling surplus just exceeding £800,000. The speech occupied five hours in the delivery, an ordeal cheerfully borne by the entranced audience. When the still young Chancellor of the

**The First Budget Speech.**

Exchequer resumed his seat the prolonged cheering from both sides assured him of triumph. "These are our proposals," he said, in the peroration then inevitable with any important speech from either front bench:—

"They may be approved, or they may be condemned, but I have this full confidence, that it will be admitted that we have not sought to evade the difficulties of the position; that we have not concealed those difficulties either from ourselves or from others; that we have not attempted to counteract them by narrow or flimsy expedients; that we have prepared plans which, if you adopt them, will go some way to close up many vexed financial questions, which, if not now settled, may be attended with public inconvenience and even with public danger, in future years, and under less favourable circumstances; that we have endeavoured in the plans we have now submitted to you to make the path of our successors in future years not more arduous, but more easy; and I may be permitted to add, that while we have sought to do justice to the great labour community of England, by furthering their relief from indirect taxation, we have not been guided by any desire to put one class against another. We have felt we should best maintain our own honour, that we should best meet the views of Parliament, and best promote the interests of the country, by declining to draw any invidious distinction between class and class, by adopting it to ourselves as a sacred aim to diffuse and distribute the burdens with equal and impartial hand. We have the consolation of believing that by proposals such as these we contribute, as far as in us lies, not only to develop the material resources of the country, but to knit the various parts of this great nation yet more closely than ever to that Throne and to those institutions under which it is our happiness to live."

Citations from his speech on moving the Resolutions on which the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill was subsequently based, and from that on the first reading of the Irish Land Bill, will testify to the empyrean heights at which his eloquence soared when he was deeply moved. The first of these speeches was delivered on March 13th, 1868; the second, on introducing the Land Bill, on February 15th, 1870. On the Irish Church resolutions he said:—

"There are many who think that to lay hands upon the National Church Establishment of a country is a profane and unhallowed act. I respect that feeling, I sympathise with it, while I think it my duty to overcome and repress it. But if it be an error it is an error entitled to respect. There is something in the idea of a national establishment of religion, of a solemn appropriation of a part of the Commonwealth for conferring upon all who are ready to receive it what we know to be an inestimable benefit; of saving that portion of the inheritance from private selfishness, in order to extract from it, if we can, pure and unmixed advantages of the highest order for the population at large, there is something in this so attractive that it is an image that must always command the homage of the many. It is somewhat like the kingly ghost in *Hamlet*, of which one of the characters of Shakespeare says:—

> 'We do it wrong, being so majestical,
> To offer it the show of violence;
> For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
> And our vain blows malicious mockery.'

But, Sir, this is to view a religious establishment upon one side only, upon what I may call the ethereal side. It has likewise a side on earth. . . . The Church Establishment, regarded in its theory and in its aim, is beautiful and attractive. Yet what is it but an appropriation of public property, an appropriation of the fruits of labour and of skill, to certain purposes, and unless these purposes are fulfilled that appropriation cannot be justified. Therefore, Sir, I cannot but feel that we must set aside fears which thrust themselves upon the imagination, and act upon the sober dictates of our judgment. I think it has been shown that the cause for action is strong—not for precipitate action, not for action beyond our powers, but for such action as the opportunities of the times and the condition of Parliament, if there be but a ready will, will amply

and easily admit of. If I am asked as to my expectations of the issue of this struggle I begin by frankly avowing that I, for one, would not have entered into it unless I believed the final hour was about to sound—

'Venit summa dies et ineluctabile fatum.'

The issue is not in our hands. What we had and have to do is to consider well and deeply before we take the first step in an engagement such as this; but, having entered into the controversy, there and then to acquit ourselves like men, and to use every effort to remove what still remain of the scandals and calamities in the relations which exist between England and Ireland, to make our best efforts, at least, to fill up with the cement of human concord the noble fabric of the British Empire."

The following is the final passage of his speech on introducing what proved to be a succession of Irish Land Bills:—

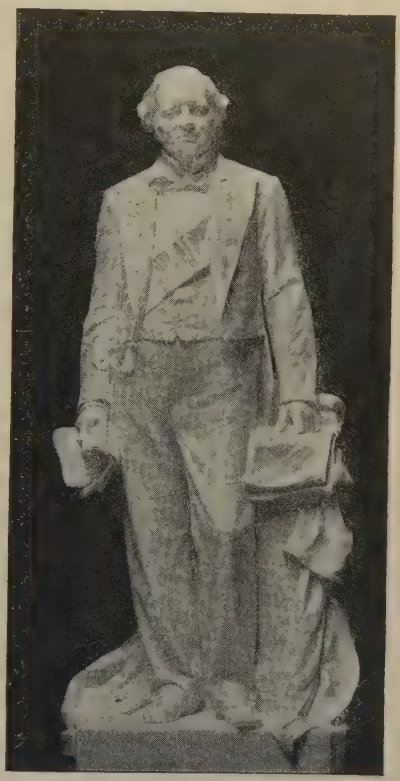
"If I am asked what I hope to effect by this Bill, I certainly hope we shall effect a great change in Ireland. But I hope also, and confidently believe, that this change will be accomplished by gentle means. Every line of the measure has been studied with the desire that it shall import as little as possible of shock or violent alteration into any single arrangement now existing between landlord and tenant in Ireland. There is, no doubt, much to be done. There is, no doubt, much to be improved on. What we desire is that the work of this Bill should be like the work of Nature herself, when on the face of the desolated land she restores what has been laid waste by the wild and savage hand of man. Its operations, we believe, will be quiet and gradual. We wish to alarm none; we wish to injure no one. What we wish is that where there has been despondency there shall be hope; where there has been mistrust there shall be confidence; where there has been alienation and hate there shall, however gradually, be woven the ties of a strong attachment between man and man. This we know cannot be done in a day. The measure has reference to evils which have been long at work. Their roots strike far back into bygone centuries. It is against the ordinance of Providence, as it is against the interest of man, that immediate reparation should in such cases be possible. One of the main restraints of misdoing would be removed if the consequences of misdoing could in a moment receive a remedy. For such reparation and such effects it is that we look from this Bill; and we reckon on them not less surely and not less confidently because we know they must be gradual and slow; and because we are likewise aware that if it be poisoned by the malignant agency of angry or of bitter passions, it cannot do its proper work. In order that there may be a hope of its entire success, it must be passed—not as a triumph of party over party or class over class; not as the lifting up of an ensign to record the downfall of that which has once been great and powerful—but as a common work of common love and goodwill to the common good of our common country. With such objects and in such a spirit as that, this House will address itself to the work and sustain the feeble efforts of the Government. And my hope, at least, is high and ardent that we shall see our work prosper in our hand, and that in that Ireland which we desire to unite to England and Scotland by the only enduring ties—those of free-will and free affection—peace, order, and a settled and cheerful industry will diffuse their blessings from year to year, from day to day, over a smiling land."

Irish Land.

When the Parliament, fruit of the General Election in February, 1874, met for the despatch of business, the decimated and disheartened Liberal members were summoned by the customary circular letter signed by Mr. Gladstone. It was promptly followed by the first of two famous letters to "My dear Granville," in which the defeated chief announced that "at my age I must reserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time." This is one of the first public references to advancing years, as compelling thoughts of retirement, used by Mr. Gladstone, then in his sixty-fourth year. Twenty years later, again leader of the House of Commons, in charge of a hotly contested measure,

the reference in slightly varied form became habitual. "At my time of life" was a phrase, written or spoken, constantly in use.

There is no doubt that in the spring of 1874 Mr. Gladstone deliberately contemplated retirement from the political arena, a decision formally and finally communicated to Lord Granville on the 13th of January, 1875. At the opening of the session of 1874, the orator who for more than a quarter of a century filled a foremost place in the assembly, almost ostentatiously eschewed it. Occasionally he looked in at question time, but was careful by minute details of dress and conduct to indicate the casual nature of his appearance. He did not advance along the Front Opposition Bench beyond the modest end aligned with the Speaker's footstool, where ex-Junior Lords of the Treasury and former Under-Secretaries blush unseen. He invariably brought with him not only stick and gloves, but his hat, which, for the first time within memory of members of less than thirty years' standing, he wore whilst the Speaker was in the chair.



LORD GRANVILLE.

(*From the Statue in the Houses of Parliament, by Hamo Thornycroft, R.A.*)

This abstention from daily attendance, made all the more striking the orator's sudden swoop down upon the House with all his ancient fires ablaze. The incursion, which took place in the month of July, 1874, when younger members were beginning to make arrangements for leaving town, chanced in connection with the Public Worship Regulation Bill. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Tait, introduced the measure in the House of Lords, through which it quietly passed. When it came down to the Commons, in charge of Mr. Russell Gurney, the Government suddenly, unexpectedly developed a keen interest in it. Mr. Disraeli personally espoused its cause, describing it in a memorable phrase as "designed to put down Ritualism." Sir William Harcourt, anticipating a line of conduct taken at an equally late period of a session twenty-four years later, joined hands across the table with the Prime Minister. Mr. Gladstone entered the lists armed with that sheaf of resolutions which had for him attraction as irresistible as the "three courses." As in those July days, when the town was fading under stress of a prolonged season, he stood at the table fulminating with flashing eyes and magnificent gestures against the Bill thus strangely favoured, it was perceived that the old lion was not dead nor even sleeping. Not long had the new members been kept waiting for a taste of the great orator's quality.

Personal interest his reappearance gave to the debate was heightened by the attitude of an old lieutenant, whose knightly spurs, one of the ex-Premier's latest gifts to his colleagues, still shone with the gloss of newness. At this new turn in the history of the Liberal party, there were passing some marked courtesies between Mr. Disraeli and Sir William Harcourt, observed with amused interest in the House. Mr. Gladstone's ex-Solicitor-General publicly hailed the Conservative Premier as "a leader of this House who is proud of the House of Commons, and of whom the House of Commons is proud." "We may well," he continued, swinging about to turn his back upon his old chief sitting attentive at the lower end of the bench, "leave the vindication of the reputation of this famous assembly to one who will well know how to defend its credit and its dignity against the ill-advised railing of a rash and rancorous tongue."

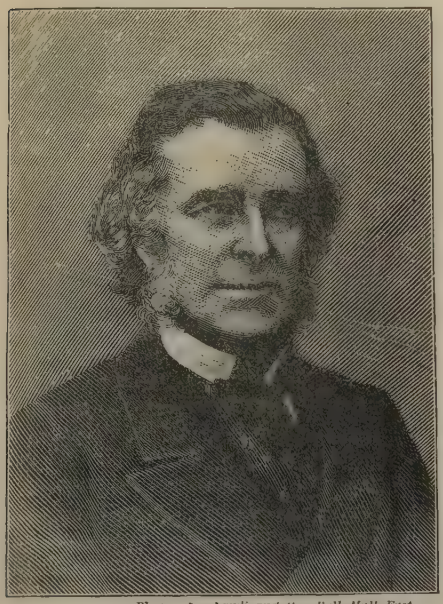


*Photo: Lombardi and Co., Pall Mall East.*

RUSSELL GURNEY (*p.* 505).

That there might be no doubt as to who was thus assailed, Sir William Harcourt proceeded to reply to Mr. Gladstone's speech, pouring contumely and scorn on its erudition, its wide and intimate acquaintance with the dark places of canon law. He would have none of such subtleties, insisting on arguing the question on the ground of common sense and common law.

This scene happened on a Friday. It was half-past ten when Sir William rose, an hour at which, when debate is interesting, the House is accustomed to present a crowded, even hilarious, appearance. Nothing the white-necktied gentry opposite had partaken of at dinner gave them such keen enjoyment as this belabouring of the ex-Premier by one of his own young men. Mr. Gladstone bided his time. It came five days later, when Sir William Harcourt attempted to reply on those very lines he had scornfully deprecated. Mr. Gladstone was down upon him with crushing rapidity and force. "I confess," said he, in one of his happiest debating efforts, "I greatly admire the manner in which the hon. and learned gentleman"—the House was quick to note the significance of this distant mode of reference to a former colleague—"has used his time since Friday night. On Friday night he was, as he says, taken by surprise. The lawyer was taken by surprise, and so was the professor of law in the University of Cambridge. The lawyer was taken by surprise, and, in consequence, he had nothing to deliver to the House except a series of propositions on which I will not comment . . . . Finding that he

**Turning upon Sir William Harcourt.**

has delivered to the House most extraordinary propositions of law and history that will not bear a moment's examination, my hon. and learned friend has had the opportunity of spending four or five days in better informing himself upon the subject, and he is in a position to come down to this House, and for an hour and a half to display and develop the erudition he has thus rapidly and cleverly acquired. Human nature could not possibly resist such a temptation, and my hon. and learned friend has succumbed to it on this occasion."

In his speech in the House of Commons on proposing a public funeral to Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Arthur Balfour finely said—

"I suppose each one of us who have had the good fortune to be able to watch any part of his wonderful career must have in his mind some particular example which seems to him to embody the best and the greatest excellences of this most excellent member of Parliament. The scene which comes back to my mind is one relating to an outworn and half-forgotten controversy, now more than twenty years past, in which, as it happened, Mr. Gladstone was placed in the most difficult position which it is possible for a man to occupy—a position in which he finds himself opposed to the united and vigorous forces of his ordinary opponents, but does not happen at the moment to have behind him more than the hesitating and somewhat timid sympathy of his friends. On this particular occasion I remember there was one of those preliminary Parliamentary debates—I ought to say series of debates—which preceded the main business of the evening. In this Mr. Gladstone had to speak not once or twice, but several times, and it was not until hour after hour had passed in this preliminary skirmish in a House hostile, impatient, and utterly wearied, that he got up to present his case with that conviction that he was right which was his great strength as a speaker in or out of the House. I never, Sir, shall forget the impression that speech left on my mind. As a mere feat of physical endurance it is almost unsurpassed; as a feat of Parliamentary courage, Parliamentary skill, Parliamentary endurance, and Parliamentary eloquence, I believe it will always be unequalled."

**A Notable Triumph.**

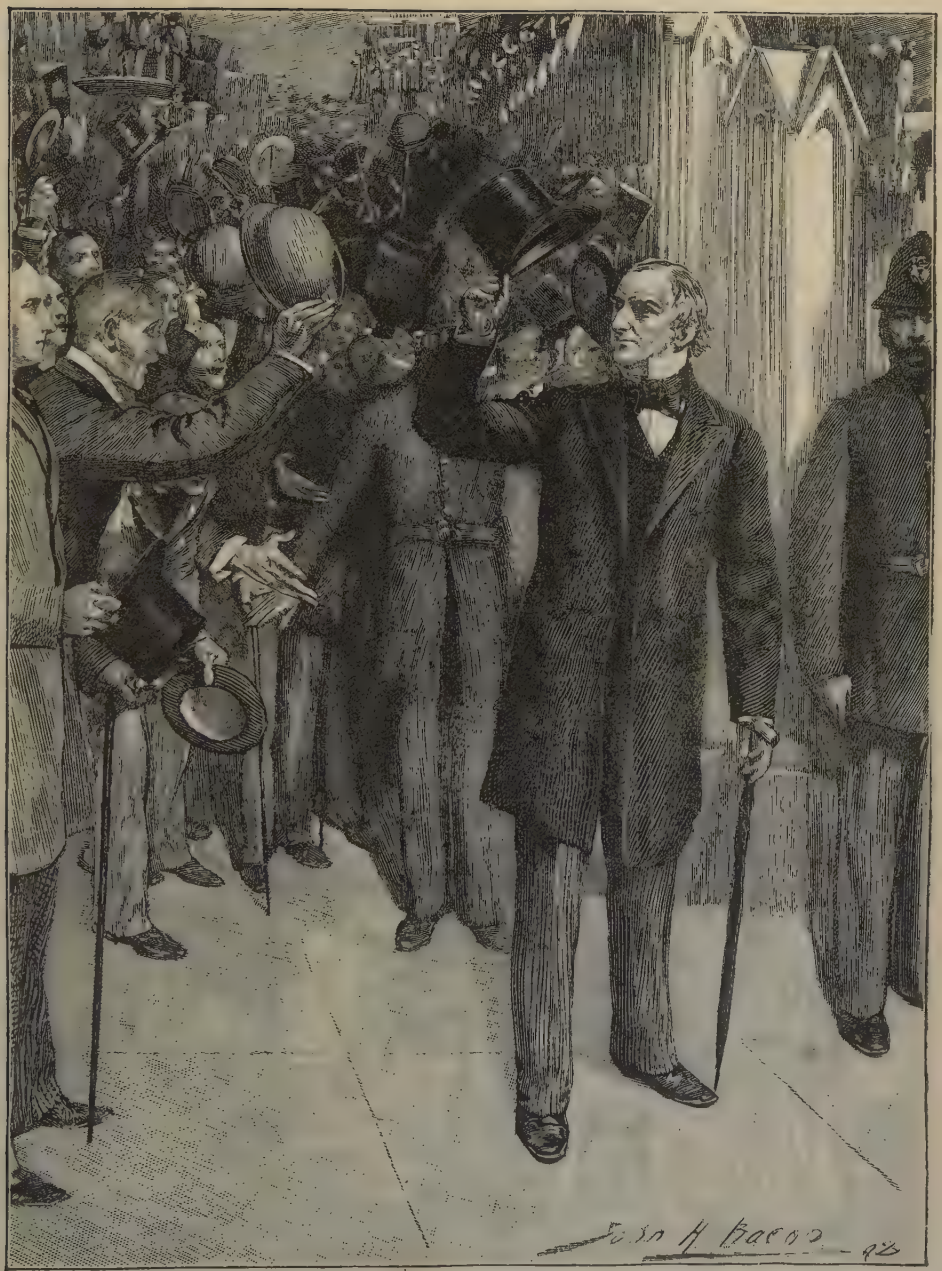
The episode which thus dwelt in the memory of the Leader of the House in the session of 1898 dates back to the session of 1877. Mr. Gladstone, called from his retirement by the irresistible cry that wailed over the blood-stained plains and harried hamlets of Bulgaria, resumed constant attendance upon the House of Commons. In spite of Lord Hartington's official position, he inevitably resumed the real leadership of the Opposition. His return was viewed with mixed feelings on the benches to the left of the Speaker. There was an undercurrent of feeling that it was hardly fair to Lord Hartington, who, in obedience to the call of duty, had, at a time of apparently hopeless depression, undertaken the leadership. He had fulfilled his part patiently, with a certain massive dignity. For the lost Leader, who had voluntarily, in the hour of defeat, abdicated, now to come back and supersede the nominal Captain of the Opposition was a condition of things that, naturally and properly, grated on the feelings. Thus it came to pass that whilst the sight of Mr. Gladstone storming in the van had the effect of closing up the ranks of the Ministerialists, it further disorganised a political party whose most conspicuous quality is not cohesion.

When Mr. Gladstone read at the table the text of the Five Resolutions he proposed to move, the slight cheering on the Opposition benches made more marked the ominous silence that brooded over that quarter of the House. The Resolutions expressed general dissatisfaction with the conduct

of the Ottoman Porte, and declared that until guarantees on behalf of the subject populations were forthcoming, Turkey should be deemed to have lost all claim to receive either the material or moral support of the British Crown. At this time of day the idea of the British Crown proposing to extend either material or moral support to the Sultan is so remote from actuality that the mere suggestion is startling. It was very different in the spring of 1877, when, as Lord Salisbury has since admitted, he and his political friends, at the time supported by the preponderance of public opinion, were "putting their money on the wrong horse." Not for the first time in his political career, Mr. Gladstone was twenty years ahead of public opinion. Sir Stafford Northcote, then Leader of the House of Commons, perceiving the disintegrating possibilities of the Five Resolutions moved from the Front Opposition Bench, cheerfully set apart a day for their consideration. No sooner was this done than Sir John Lubbock, then ranking as the safest of Liberals, was put up to give notice to move the previous question.

This happened on the 30th of April, 1877. A week later, on the day appointed for moving the Resolutions, Mr. Gladstone came down to find the House peopled as it only is on rare occasions. Outside, at the gates of Palace Yard, a crowd, long waiting his coming, hailed with ringing cheer the man who had already deeply stirred the heart of the masses by the magnificent orations in which he had pleaded the cause of hapless Bulgaria. There was no echo of the applause in the House of Commons. In accordance with ordinary usage, as soon as questions were over Mr. Gladstone would have risen and commenced his speech. Before he found his opportunity much happened, irritating, embarrassing, fatal to any but the supremest orator. First of all Sir George (then Mr.) Trevelyan rose from below the gangway and asked Mr. Gladstone if he had objection to vary the terms of his second resolution. The Ministerialists, shrewdly perceiving in this the sign of an arrangement between Mr. Gladstone and his perturbed friends, riotously cheered. The hilarious demonstration was renewed when, Mr. Gladstone assenting, Lord Hartington threw in his lot with the Resolutions and advised Sir John Lubbock to withdraw his amendment.

The Ministerialists, assembled in large numbers and in high spirits in expectation of seeing Mr. Gladstone flouted by his own party, did not conceal their mortification at the unexpected turn of events. The modification of the second resolution accepted by Mr. Gladstone was merely verbal. It was a golden bridge built with the object of enabling the Leaders of the Opposition to cross over and join the man whom a week earlier they had tried to slay with a stony stare. There followed a scene that might well burn itself into the generous memory of the young member for Hertford, whom at the time none thought to see in the seat of the Leader. Whenever Mr. Gladstone appeared at the table with intent to open his speech, Conservative gentlemen of the standing of Mr. Greene, Mr. Percy Wyndham and Mr. Bentinck ("Big Ben") rose in succession. Availing themselves of the forms of the House, they managed to harry Mr. Gladstone for fully half an hour. So surely as he stood at the table, one or other — at one moment all three — were on their feet, rising to a point of order. If there had been marshalled behind Mr. Gladstone a united and enthusiastic body of followers, this badgering would hardly



MR. GLADSTONE ENTERING THE GATES OF PALACE YARD (*p.* 508).

have been possible. A burst of angry indignation would, at any rate, have materially shortened it. As it was, he stood practically alone in his whole-hearted advocacy of the cause of the Bulgarians. Warned by the growing murmur out of doors, his former colleagues found it expedient not to range themselves in open opposition to him. But at least they would not support him with their cheers.

It was seven o'clock when, the resources of obstruction exhausted, Mr. Gladstone was permitted to embark upon his speech. Beyond the irritation and exhaustion attendant upon this baiting, he was handicapped by the period of the sitting now reached. A slight acquaintance with the House of Commons enables one to realise the difference between rising to deliver an important speech at five o' clock in the afternoon and having the opportunity postponed till seven o'clock. These accumulated difficulties made greater the triumph that followed. The orator spoke for two hours and a half, right through the dinner-hour, a period ordinarily fatal to the most entrancing eloquence. At the beginning the unruly conduct of members opposite was renewed. Gradually, as he proceeded, the spell of his oratory, the fire of his righteous indignation, overcame everything. When he resumed his seat, and the Speaker rose to submit the first Resolution, it was some moments before the latter could make his voice heard above the tumult of cheers that filled the House. Two days after the Resolutions were laid on the table, a careful estimate of the possibilities of a division made by one of Mr. Gladstone's friends, and therefore not likely to be tinctured by despondency, produced a list of eighty-nine members who were certain to follow him into the division lobby, seven being marked as wavering. On the eve of the division, Mr. Gladstone contributed another speech, his rising now being greeted by prolonged cheering from the Opposition. When the figures were announced it appeared that 223, practically the full muster of the Opposition, had gone with him into the division lobby. Rarely in Parliamentary history has such a victory been won by any orator against overwhelming odds.

This narrative goes some way in the direction of sustaining Mr. Balfour's view that here we have the climax of Mr. Gladstone's career as a Parliamentary speaker. For my part I am disposed to fix upon the Bradlaugh debates as the epoch upon which the future historian will dwell with fullest appreciation. There were connected with it circumstances almost terrible in their intensity and pathos. Mr. Gladstone's speeches, his writings—as finally illustrated in that noble document his last will and testament—and above all his daily life, testified to his devotional habits of mind, the spirituality of his character. Mr. Bradlaugh's admission to the place in the House of Commons claimed for him by the electors of Northampton was challenged on the specific ground that he did not believe in the existence of Almighty God. Such a frame of mind in any intelligent human being was as shocking to Mr. Gladstone as it was inexplicable, not to say unnatural. It proved too much for Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Wolff, and Sir John Gorst. They entered upon a crusade against the atheist as untiring, as implacable, as any achievement of the ancient Inquisition. By the side of the avowed atheist, facing these sturdy Christians, stood Mr. Gladstone.

**The Bradlaugh Debates.**

Apart from personal convictions and predilections, the course adopted

by him as Premier involved enormous sacrifices. The Fourth Party and the Conservative Opposition, who, with the significant exception of the Attorney-General, Sir John Holker, joined in the protest against the claim to make affirmation, were not alone in their repugnance to Mr. Bradlaugh. As successive divisions showed, Mr. Gladstone's personal followers, fresh from the polls where victory had been won by the glamour of his name, proved contumelious. Soon there was presented the curious spectacle of the Premier, nominal captain of an overwhelming majority, retiring, so to speak, to a back seat when the Bradlaugh question in its many phases came up, leaving the leadership of the House to Sir Stafford Northcote. In this opening session of the Parliament of 1880-5, the Liberal party suffered, in connection with the Bradlaugh affair, a blow from which the Administration never wholly recovered. Mr. Gladstone knew the price he paid for doing what he held to be right. But then, as six years later when he was faced with the Home Rule problem, he, not counting the cost, followed the dictates of his conscience.

The peculiar and painful difficulties of the situation brought out in fuller force the splendour of his oratorical gifts. "I have no fear of atheism in this House," he said in the course of his speech on moving the second reading of the Affirmation Bill, brought in after three years' wrangling around the Bradlaugh question :—

"Truth is the expression of the Divine mind, and however little our feeble vision may be able to discern the means by which God may provide for its preservation, we may leave the matter in His hands. We may be sure that a firm and courageous application of every principle of equity and of justice is the best method we can adopt for the preservation and influence of truth. I must painfully record my opinion that grave injury has been done to religion in many minds—not in instructed minds, but in those which are ill instructed or partially instructed, and which have large claims on our consideration—in consequence of steps which have unhappily been taken. Great mischief has been done in many minds through the resistance offered to a man elected by the constituency of Northampton, which a portion of the people believe to be unjust. When they see the profession of religion and the interests of religion ostensibly associated with what they are deeply convinced is injustice, they are led to questionings about religion itself. Unbelief attracts a sympathy which it would not otherwise enjoy, and the upshot is to impair those convictions and that religious faith the loss of which I believe to be the most inexpressible calamity which can fall either upon a man or upon a nation."

The lofty tone of this exquisite passage pervades all the long series of contributions to a memorable and prolonged debate. Almost his noble eloquence achieved the desired end. The overwhelming majority against which through three years he struggled to do justice to a man whose views were abhorrent to him was finally reduced to three. After this Mr. Gladstone retired from the combat. But he lived long enough to see Mr. Bradlaugh take his seat as member for Northampton with the tacit consent of a powerful Conservative Ministry, unchallenged by the party which, four years earlier, had hounded him out of the House and hustled him down the stairway into Palace Yard. Mr. Bradlaugh was on his death-bed when news came to him that the House of Commons, under Conservative predominancy, had, without a dissentient voice, erased from the order book the resolution carried at the instance of Lord Randolph Churchill, declaring that "Charles Bradlaugh, having taken the oath, is as dead."

When, in the early days of 1886, Mr. Gladstone undertook to crown his

task of doing justice to Ireland by bestowing Home Rule upon the country, he was long past the age at which, according to the Psalmist, man's life is but labour and sorrow. "My time of life" lacked only three years of fourscore. For a man whose life for half a century had been one of incessant labour it would have sufficed if he had been content to make the round of his official duties as easy as possible. Mr. Gladstone in his seventy-seventh year deliberately undertook what was perhaps the most arduous task even of his wonderful career. Here again, as happened in the case of his duel with Mr. Disraeli's Government on the Eastern Question, had he been backed by a united party his load would have been greatly lightened. His first direct movement on the path of Home Rule was marked by the breaking up of his Cabinet, the disintegration of his party, the severing of life-long friendships, and the bursting around him of a storm of contumely that must have been startling even to his long and varied experience. The thanes fled from him. His most dangerous enemies were those of his own household. But he abated not one jot of heart or hope.

**The Home Rule Debates.**

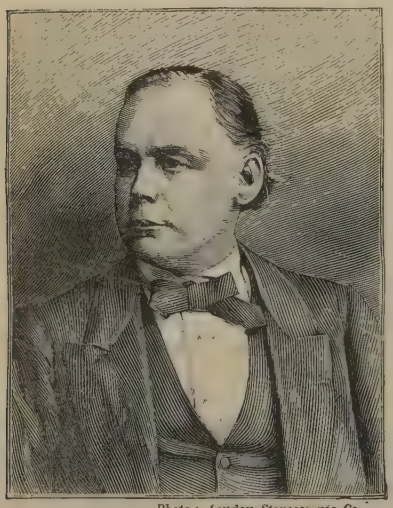


*Photo: London Stereoscopic Co.*
CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

On the 8th of April, 1886, in a speech that, measured by the clock, occupied three hours and a half in delivery, and was a marvel of lucid exposition, cogent argument, and lofty appeal, he unfolded his scheme for endowing Ireland with Home Rule. The disclosure hastened and extended the desertions from his flag. He delivered another great speech on the Second Reading. But the cause was hopeless. Returned at the General Election in December, 1885, with a majority only two votes short of the combined forces of the Conservatives and Parnellites, he saw the Home Rule Bill of 1886 thrown out by a majority of thirty, albeit the Irish Nationalists voted with him to a man.

This was more than defeat. It was a rout. It resulted in exclusion from office for six years, a period he occupied in preparing for fresh efforts. When, as he avowed at Oxford, speaking on the eve of the session of 1878, his purpose day and night, week by week, month by month, was to counterwork what he believed to be the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield in the Eastern Question, he embarked upon what proved to be the first of a series of memorable oratorical campaigns in Midlothian. Faced in the summer of 1892 by the prospect of a General Election upon which depended his last hope of carrying the Home Rule Bill, he once more turned his face northward, carrying the fiery cross over the Border on to the familiar battle ground of Midlothian.

Those privileged to accompany him in earlier campaigns, watching his progress through this closing scene, recognised the difference Home Rule

had wrought in the popular attitude towards the member for Midlothian. Crowds still peopled the halls where he spoke—at Edinburgh, Glasgow, or adjacent centres of population. But the wild enthusiasm that seethed around him in 1879, preluding the great victory of 1880, was not now paralleled. In no part of the kingdom had Liberalism suffered on account of Home Rule more grievously than in Scotland. Mr. Gladstone could not have been blind to the signs of the times. But he was successful in disguising apprehension, and his eloquence was as full as ever of fire and inspiration. The only notable effect of popular apathy was to

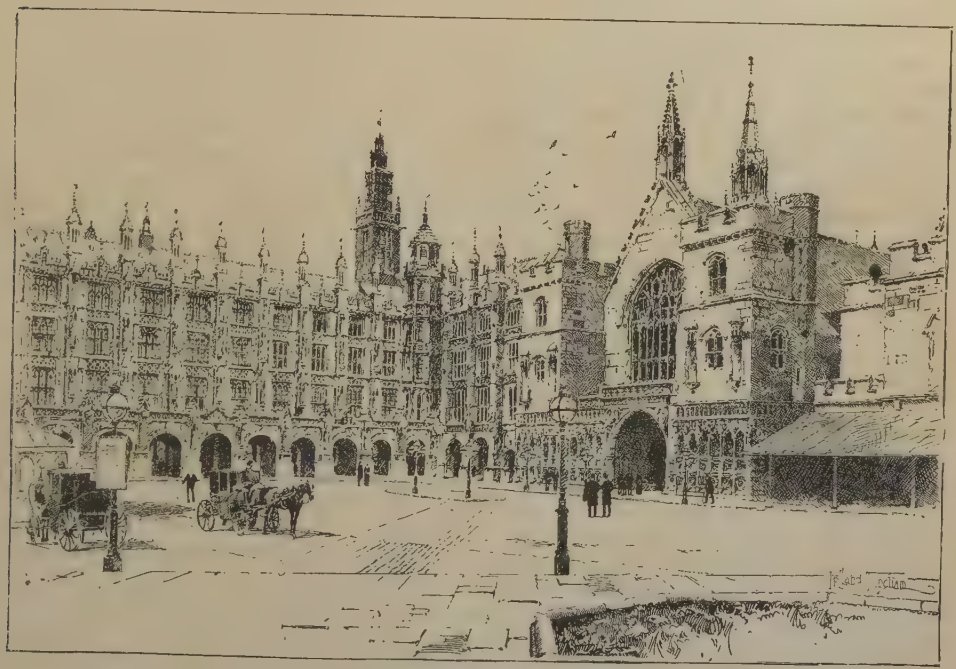


*Photo: G. W. Wilson and Co., Aberdeen.*

NEW PALACE YARD, WESTMINSTER.

redouble the zeal with which he applied himself to preach the crusade. "Too small! too small!" he said, slowly shaking his head when the final result of the poll giving him a majority of forty was communicated to him in the library at Dalmeny. That was the only cry approaching despair that issued from his lips.

On the 13th of February, 1892, he rose in the House of Commons to ask leave to bring in a new Home Rule Bill, a measure with which he had interwoven the sad experience of the preceding six years.

**The New Home Rule Bill, 1892.**

As in 1886, it was a great speech, delivered to a magnificent audience. At six o'clock in the morning members came down struggling for seats. As soon as the Strangers' Galleries were open, noble lords fought for places as if the Peers' Gallery were the pit entrance of a transpontine theatre. For the

second time in Parliamentary history attempt was made to enlarge the accommodation of the House by filling up the floor space with rows of chairs. Driving through a cheering multitude at the gates of Palace Yard, Mr. Gladstone was received in the House of Commons by the Liberal party upstanding and loudly applauding. He was in fine form, beaming with hope. For two hours and a quarter he kept the audience entranced. Having expounded the details of his measure, he laid aside his notes and, turning to the House, taking in all quarters in the pleading glance of moist eyes, he besought members to lose no time in stamping and sealing the deed that should efface the long-standing animosity between sister islands. For himself he never would be a party to bequeathing to his country a continuance of the heritage of discord handed down from generation to generation through seven centuries. "It would be a misery to me," he said in a voice broken with emotion, "if in these closing years of my life I had omitted any measures possible for me to take towards upholding and promoting what I believe to be the cause not of one party or of another, but of all parties and all nations inhabiting these islands. Let me entreat you," he added in last words, spoken in low but clear voice that vibrated through the hushed audience, "if it were with my latest breath I would entreat you, to let the dead bury its dead. Cast behind you every recollection of bygone evils; cherish, love, sustain one another through all the vicissitudes of human affairs in the times that are to come."

A marvellous achievement this leading of a forlorn hope burdened with the weight of more than fourscore years. Old age, long kept at bay, was beginning to show signs of the inevitable victory. Towards the end of the second hour the Premier betrayed physical distress, and his voice through long passages grew hoarse. But for intellectual achievement, oratorical force and beauty, this speech, with its long-sustained peroration, will bear comparison with some of his earlier and otherwise unapproachable efforts.

The almost nonagenarian Premier's connection with the Home Rule Bill of 1892 was not confined to the delivery of a series of great speeches, worthily culminating in a splendid oration moving the Third Reading. He took charge of the measure in committee, piloting it through dangerous reaches with unwearied solicitude, infinite skill. His fame as an orator has a tendency to eclipse his reputation in the less florid field of the debater. In this he was unequalled, save perhaps by Mr. Chamberlain. His only fault was excessive readiness to explain. So superabundant was his energy even in the last session of his Parliamentary career that he could not sit quiet and rest if twittering or cawing from whatsoever inconsiderable nest invited him to join in the conversation.

It was a study of this generous weakness that had given Lord Randolph Churchill his earliest opening. To "draw Gladstone" was the first, most sedulously practised duty of the nascent Fourth Party. Had Lord Randolph and his merry men had Disraeli to deal with, the Fourth Party would have been unknown to fame. As Mr. Horsman and Mr. Bentinck discovered, there was little use in butting heads against the stone wall of Disraeli's imperturbability. When they girded at him he had a way of folding his arms and assuming a far-away look that was fatally chilling. Mr. Gladstone, in the plenitude of his power, was

anybody's game. Lord Randolph Churchill, Sir Henry Wolff, and Sir John Gorst reduced to a science the art of cunningly recruiting him in the service of obstruction. Quite inferior persons, like Mr. Warton, sometime member for Bridport, and Sir (then Mr.) E. Ashmead-Bartlett, were equally successful. If Mr. Gladstone had been able to practise more self-restraint, and had treated with contempt attacks that had really no importance, Mr. Warton would never have secured a colonial judgeship, nor would the Anglo-American who in the 1880–5 Parliament represented Eye have become Civil Lord of the Admiralty and a knight to boot.

Had anyone of less exuberant power been in charge of the Home Rule Bill in the session of 1886, it would not have occupied eighty-two days in passing its successive stages. On the Third Reading Mr. Gladstone mentioned that 459 speeches had been made in committee. "An awful roll," he said, unconscious that for its accumulation he personally was largely responsible. His continuous presence on the Treasury Bench, interrupted only by the time necessary for a hasty meal, had much to do with it. The biggest bore knew that if the benches on both sides emptied at his rising he would have an eager audience in the Prime Minister. If he spoke long enough he might peradventure succeed in bringing the right hon. gentleman to his feet, and in the local newspapers it would be seen how "the Prime Minister rose to reply" to him. At any rate he would try; and so speech droned along.

Doubtless at the base of this inconvenient habit of listening and this fatal readiness to be drawn into debate was natural courtesy. Whether in public or in private Mr. Gladstone instinctively practised those habits of courtesy we truly call old-fashioned. If a member of the House of Commons, the duly elected representative of a constituency, thought he had something to say on a question before the House, he should be listened to, perhaps the more punctiliously because of the unconcealed indifference of others to pay attention. If he was in error on a matter of fact or muddled in his argument, it was only polite to put him right.

Few public men have been more bitterly reviled than Mr. Gladstone. None has left in his speeches fewer traces of reprisal. During the 1880–85 Parliament, when it became a painful and reluctantly avowed necessity to bring in a Coercion Bill, the personal bearing of the Irish members towards the statesman who had disestablished an alien Church and freed Irish land was simply atrocious. It remained unparalleled in public life until the schism of Committee-room No. 15 turned their swords upon each other. It was too much for Mr. Bright, whom a modified experience of the same character drove into the enemy's camp. Mr. Gladstone never by word, sign, or act disclosed remembrance of the insults heaped upon him. One of the most blatant of his assailants in the 1880 Parliament was, in the session of 1886, received as a guest at Hawarden, and for the remaining term of Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary life was dignified by reference in debate as "my hon. friend." The same magnanimity marked his bearing towards the sundered friends who thwarted his darling purpose and made possible in his despite the long existence of a Conservative Government. He never made response to the bitter attacks of the Duke of Argyll, which towards the end, having the excuse of failing health, Mr. Bright more than once echoed. He

Mr. Gladstone's Magnanimity.

never spoke of Lord Hartington save in terms of affectionate regard. He took an opportunity in the very heat of debate on the Home Rule Bill to pay a graceful compliment to the son of the most active, the most capable, and the most implacable deserter from his flag, a generosity shortly after repaid by the father likening him to King Herod on the eve of his awful and well-earned fate.

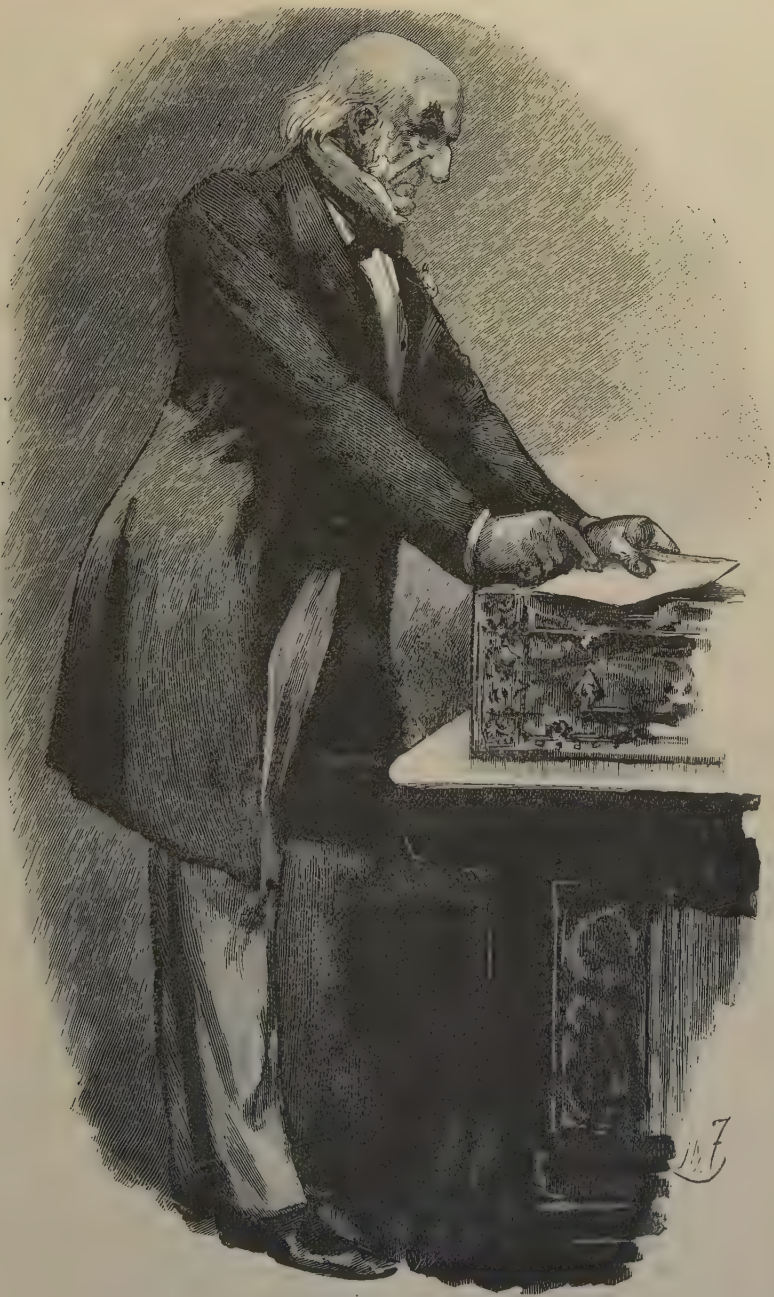
Only once did he yield to what to ordinary mankind must have been the daily temptation to turn and rend Mr. Chamberlain. That was an occasion the delight of which still lingers in the minds of those present. It happened in the last session of the first Salisbury Parliament, throughout which the seceders from Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet of 1886 somewhat embarrassingly insisted on their right to share with him and his more faithful colleagues the privilege of the Front Opposition Bench. From this coign of vantage Mr. Chamberlain made one of his sharply pointed speeches, rapturously cheered by the Conservative party opposite. It was designed deeply to wound Mr. Gladstone, and possibly in other moods it might have had the effect. By happy chance, instead of striking the old chief between the shoulder blades, it tickled him in the midriff. He literally came up smiling, and, regardless of etiquette, turning his back upon the Speaker, he bent over Mr. Chamberlain a provokingly benevolent face, with possibly just a flash of malice in the gleaming eyes as he probed him to the quick. It was not often he indulged in this light sword play. The speech, bubbling through a continuous roar of laughter and cheering, showed him perfect master of this branch of the orator's art.

As a Memorial Orator.

Amongst the most difficult phases of Parliamentary oratory, certainly the one marked by fewest successes, is the duty of lamenting the great dead. From time to time it happens that the two front benches in both Houses are called upon to join in lamenting the passing away either of a former colleague or of someone illustrious outside the walls of Parliament. The very elaboration of preparation militates against the impulse and movement of true oratory. The House is crowded; the scene is stiffly set; each speaker has his cue, and is conscious that he is expected to do something equal to the occasion. It is a matter of history how at one such time Mr. Disraeli, exceptionally diffident of his own resources, "conveyed" the exordium of a French orator, and with boldly slight alteration moulded it to his current need. It would be invidious to run through the brief list of Cabinet and ex-Cabinet Ministers of the present day to whom the lot of public lamentation has fallen and discuss their manner of accomplishing their task. None had longer experience or a wider variety of topic than Mr. Gladstone. None approached the perfection of his style.

Comparatively early in his Ministerial career it fell to his lot to second a motion for the adjournment of the House on news reaching it of the death of Sir Robert Peel. It was in this speech that he quotes from Sir Walter Scott the lines that have already been cited in these pages.* This musically melancholy verse, first tuned by Scott at the bier of Pitt, murmured again through the House of Commons when, on a bright summer day in 1898, it once more adjourned,

* See p. 83.



AT THE TABLE.

a Parliamentary man as great as Pitt having answered to the old Lobby cry, "Who goes home?"

Less than two years after Peel's death, Mr. Gladstone joined in the tribute paid to the memory of the Duke of Wellington, who had died during the recess. There is one passage in this speech worth quoting, not only as an example of this phase of his oratory, but as presenting in the concluding sentences a characterisation which with curious minuteness and fidelity fits himself:—

"While many of the actions of his life, while many of the qualities he possessed, are unattainable by others, there are lessons which we may all derive from the life and actions of that illustrious man. It may never be given to another subject of the Crown to perform services so brilliant as he performed. It may never be given to another man to hold the sword which was to gain the independence of Europe, to rally the nations around it, and while England saved herself by her constancy, to save Europe by her example. It may never be given to another man, after having attained such eminence, after an unexpected series of victories, to show equal moderation in peace as he had shown greatness in war, and to devote the remainder of his life to the cause of internal and external peace for that country which he had so served. It may never be given to another man to have equal authority both with the Sovereign he served and with the Senate of which he was to the end a venerated member. It may never be given to another man after such a career to preserve even to the last the full possession of those great faculties with which he was endowed, and to carry on the services of one of the most important departments of the State with unexampled regularity and success, even to the latest day of his life. These are circumstances, these are qualities, which may never occur again in the history of this country. But there are qualities which the Duke of Wellington displayed, of which we may all act in humble imitation. That sincere and unceasing devotion to our country; that honest and upright determination to act for the benefit of the country on every occasion; that devoted loyalty which, while it made him ever anxious to serve the Crown, never induced him to conceal from the Sovereign that which he believed to be the truth; that devotedness in the constant performance of duty; that temperance of his life, which enabled him at all times to give his mind and his faculties to the services he was called on to perform; that regular, consistent, and unceasing piety by which he was distinguished at all times in his life: these are qualities that are attainable by others, and these are qualities which should not be lost as an example."

The humble imitation recommended by Mr. Gladstone in the mid-century was closely, if undesignedly, followed by him throughout his life. In the speeches delivered, whether in the Lords or Commons, when proposal was made to honour Mr. Gladstone with a public funeral and a memorial in Westminster Abbey, there was heard no more exact and comprehensive appreciation of his character than is found in his own portraiture of the Duke of Wellington.

**Last Speech in the House.**

Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone, differing sharply at all points of their public and private life, were oddly alike in the manner of their final exit from the House of Commons. In the case of both last speeches only a small inner circle of colleagues was aware that never again would the speaker stand at the table of the House. It was from the morning newspapers the public learned that the old familiar friend Benjamin Disraeli was thenceforward Earl of Beaconsfield. From the same source of information came the news that Mr. Gladstone had resigned the Premiership. It is true that for some time previous to the 1st of March, 1894, there had been rumours of intended resignation. Mr. Gladstone had lately returned from Biarritz, where he had spent a recess which lightened a

session opening on the 31st of January in one year, closing on the 5th of March in the next. It was said that his eyesight was failing, and that he had resolved to go. When on the 1st day of March he briskly entered from behind the Speaker's chair, his appearance was closely scanned. It did not suggest a broken-down physique, nor did the speech that followed indicate failing mental power.

Apart from the interest of the occasion personal to Mr. Gladstone the sitting was a critical one. The House of Lords, not satisfied with having earlier in the long session thrown out the Home Rule Bill and wrecked the Employers' Liability Bill, had laid rough hands on the Parish Councils Bill. "How long, O Lord, how long?" What attitude would Mr. Gladstone assume under this fresh rebuff, this new nullification of the action of the people's representatives? The Radicals below the gangway were eager for war. Now or never was, in their opinion, the time to try conclusions with the House of Lords. Would Mr. Gladstone give the signal for the battle?

The Parish Councils Bill had come back to the Commons, and the business of the sitting was to consider the Lords' amendments. A ringing cheer, an unmistakable battle-cry from the Ministers, greeted the veteran captain as he stood at the table. He seemed to respond when in the opening sentence he emphatically expressed the opinion that the process of sending the Parish Councils Bill backward and forward between the two Houses had continued long enough. The fierce outburst of cheering evoked by this declaration died away when, lowering his note, he went on to show that the Lords' amendments to the Bill, though serious, affected only isolated clauses. It would therefore be better not to complete the wreck of the session by dropping this Bill, but to make the best of it as it was left by the House of Lords.

The Radicals, spoiling for a fight, heard this decision in moody silence. But the master hand knew how to touch the lyre evoking at will its stormiest music:—

"The fact is that these amendments and the treatment of several Bills of great importance which this House has sent to the House of Lords after unexampled labour raise a question of the gravest character. It is true that this is a very old question. . . . We have come to a more acute stage of the controversy. The question is whether the House of Lords is not merely to modify but to annihilate the whole work of the House of Commons—work which has been performed at an amount of sacrifice of time, labour, convenience, and perhaps health, but at any rate an amount of sacrifice totally unknown to the House of Lords. We have not been anxious to precipitate or unduly to accentuate that crisis. We have been desirous to save something from the wreck of this session's work. We feel that this Bill is of such value that upon the whole, great as we admit the objections to be to the acceptance of these amendments, the objections to the rejection of the Bill are still graver, and we desire to do nothing which would lead to its rejection. We are compelled to accompany the acceptance with the sorrowful declaration that differences not temporary or casual merely, but differences of conviction, differences of prepossession, differences of mental habit, differences of fundamental tendency, between the House of Lords and the House of Commons appear to have reached a development in the present year such as to create a state of things of which we are compelled to say that in our judgment it cannot continue. . . . Without presuming to judge of motives, without desiring or venturing to allege imputations, I have felt it a duty to state what appeared to me to be indisputable facts. That issue which is raised between a deliberative assembly elected by the votes of more than six millions and a deliberative assembly occupied by many men of virtue, by many

men of talent—of course with considerable diversities and varieties—but not so elected, is a controversy which when once raised must go on to its issue. It has been long postponed. I rejoice to say it has been postponed in many cases to a considerable degree by that discretion, circumspection, reserve in the use of enormous privileges which the House of Lords on various occasions in my recollection—in the time of the Duke of Wellington, and in the time of Lord Aberdeen and others—has used. But I am afraid that the epoch, the days of that reserve and circumspection, may be gone by. I won't abandon all hope of it. But I must say of the present—I do not like to say that the situation is intolerable, because it is a hard and may seem a dictatorial word. But I think gentlemen opposite must feel as I feel, that in some way or other a solution will have to be found for this tremendous contrariety and incessant controversy upon matters of high principle and profound importance between the representatives of the people and those who fill the nominated Chamber."

Noble lords crowding the Peers' Gallery looked down on a stirring scene. Below the gangway members rose to their feet waving hats and wildly cheering. The outburst was renewed when Mr. Gladstone continued:—

"It is not for the House of Commons to pronounce a judgment on this subject. The House of Commons is itself a party in the case. But I have no difficulty on behalf of the Government in pronouncing judgment on the issues that have been raised between the two Houses. We take frankly, fully, and finally the side of the House of Commons. The House of Commons could not be a final judge in its own case, and I am by no means anxious to precipitate proceedings of that kind, however they may be invited by an impatience most natural in the circumstances of the case. No doubt, Sir, there is a higher authority than the House of Commons. There is the authority of the nation, which must in the last resort decide. Happily, we are all of us sufficiently trained in habits of constitutional freedom to regard that authority as absolutely final. The time when that judgment is to be invited and the circumstances under which it is to be invited, constitute questions of the gravest character which the executive Government of the day can alone consider and decide."

There was nothing in this speech, which occupied in delivery just half an hour, that indicated intention on the part of the tired warrior to make his helmet a home for bees. Looking back upon it, one recognises by the light of subsequent events a farewell note. "For me," said Mr. Gladstone, dropping his hands and retiring half a pace from the brass-bound box that through sixty years had suffered so much at his hands, "my duty terminates in calling the attention of the House to the fact it is really impossible to set aside—that in considering these amendments, limited as their scope may seem to some to be, we are considering a part, an essential and inseparable part, of a question enormously large, a question that has become profoundly acute, a question that will demand a settlement, and must at an early date receive that settlement from the highest authority."

Mr. Disraeli's last speech was delivered late at night. He left the House just before the adjournment, varying his ordinary practice by walking down the floor and passing out into the Lobby, instead of taking the usual Ministerial way out behind the Speaker's chair. Mr. Gladstone, having made an end of speaking, sat down as if nothing particular had happened, as if no memorable epoch in the history of the House of Commons had been just accomplished, as if to-morrow he would be back, taking his accustomed part in the business of the House. He stayed for the debate and the divisions, and then walked out behind the Speaker's chair, to come back never more.

MR. GLADSTONE "UP."

In his masterly study of Pitt, Lord Rosebery writes :—

"His eloquence must have greatly resembled that with which Mr. Gladstone has fascinated two generations, not merely in pellucid and sparkling statement, but in those rolling and interminable sentences which come thundering in mighty succession, like the Atlantic waves on the Biscayan coast—sentences which other men have neither the understanding to form nor the vigour to utter. It seems, however, to have lacked the variety and the melody, the modulation of mood, expression, and tone which lend such enchantment to the longest efforts on the least attractive subjects of his great successor."

Not perceiving, certainly not applying, the similitude, Mr. Lecky, in his "History of England in the Nineteenth Century," incidentally confirms it :—

"Pitt had every requisite of a great debater: perfect self-possession; an unbroken flow of sonorous and dignified language; great quickness and cogency of reasoning, and especially of reply; an admirable gift of lucid and methodical statement; an extraordinary skill in arranging the course and symmetry of an unpremeditated speech; a memory singularly strong and singularly accurate. No one knew better how to turn and retort arguments, to seize in a moment on a weak point or an unguarded phrase, to evade issues which it was not convenient to press too closely, to conceal if necessary his sentiments and his intentions under a cloud of vague, brilliant, and imposing verbiage."

Without accepting the testimony of the spiteful contemporary who said Pitt spoke as if he had a mesh of worsted in his mouth, it may be assumed that Mr. Gladstone had the advantage in the matter of voice. It is indeed difficult to imagine a more perfect or better managed organ than that which sounded in many keys through more than sixty years of English public life. Its range was marvellous, as was testified by his command and final subjection of the unruly multitude that gathered to hear him at Blackheath. A later occasion when he over-

**On the Platform.**

came what appeared to ordinary mankind insuperable difficulty happened in the course of one of the Midlothian campaigns, when, in the Market Hall at Edinburgh, he addressed a crowd equal to the population of a hamlet. The vast square was so densely packed that fainting men and women were passed over the heads of the crowd towards the door as if they were portmanteaus. Absolute stillness, broken now and then by a simultaneous roar of applause, testified to the orator's command over the remotest recesses.

The House of Commons is, happily, one of the best, if not absolutely the easiest place in the world to speak in. On ordinary occasions it was not necessary for Mr. Gladstone to raise his voice above

**In the House.**

conversational pitch. But he knew how, at the proper moment, to fill the Chamber with the music of uplifted tones full and strong as the peal of an organ. Even to look at him when in the full flood of oratory was an inspiring sight. His eyes gleamed with marvellous light. Every muscle of his mobile face was in action. Each turn of successive sentences—and his sentences were exceedingly sinuous—had its appropriate gesture. His gestures were not the least remarkable, nor the least effective, element of his great speeches. They had the charm and variety of naturalness. Had it been possible to bring the cinematograph in operation whilst Mr. Gladstone was delivering one of his speeches on the Bulgarian atrocities, or the Bradlaugh business, he would have been amazed, even incredulous, in view of the result. Curran, who in the fervour of his speech used occasionally to bend down till he scratched the floor with his finger-nails, once publicly thanked God he

had no gestures. Mr. Gladstone doubtless was ignorant of the frequency and occasional furiousness of his. Mr. Disraeli's self-congratulation that between him and Mr. Gladstone there stood so substantial a piece of furniture as the table of the House of Commons is an old story. A favourite action in the frenzy of argument was to hold out his left hand palm upward, and beat it with his right, the resounding clap sometimes drowning the sound of the very word he desired to emphasise. In the same mood he banged the brass-bound box with a violence that threatened dislocation of the finger joints.

For the most part Mr. Gladstone's oratory swept on in stately, now and then tumultuous, flood, pitched on levels of loftiest heights. Intensely earnest about everything, big or little, he had no time for toying with topics. But it is a great mistake to assume, as is sometimes done, that he was devoid of humour. His gift of sarcasm, though not often indulged in, was supreme. Better still, and more often in use, was his banter. To Mr. Chaplin the House of Commons has often been indebted for ebullitions of this humour. The late Mr. Cavendish Bentinck was another member who undesignedly endeared himself to the House by the irresistible temptation his interposition in debate proved to bring Mr. Gladstone up in his lighter mood. A brilliant flash, more than usually scorching, delighted the House in the fustigation of Mr. Chamberlain, already mentioned.

The nearest parallel to that scene is to be found some dozen years earlier. It was early in the session of 1877, when Mr. Gladstone, his back to the wall, was fighting almost single-handed for down-trodden Bulgaria. The hostile feeling of the Ministerialists was at fever height, the situation being as yet unrelieved by any comforting rally of his own friends. On this particular night he rose to call attention to a despatch addressed during the recess by Lord Derby to Sir Henry Elliot, then British Minister at Constantinople. The House was crowded from floor to topmost range of the Strangers' Gallery. Members not able to find seats on the floor flocked into the side galleries. A crowd stood at the bar attentive through the hour Mr. Gladstone fulminated against the Government of Mr. Disraeli and the iniquities of the Turk. In ringing voice and with indignant gestures, he called upon Ministers definitely to state whether, after all the cruel wrong the Turk had wrought during the last twelve months, it was possible that Christian England should still be bound by the Treaty of 1856 bolstering up the Porte.

Bantering Mr. Chaplin.

An angry speech from Mr. Gathorne Hardy, then Secretary of State for War, wrought the Jingoes, numerically vastly predominating the audience, to a pitch of passion approaching frenzy. Mr. Chaplin fitly expressed this in an acrimonious speech. Bending a glowing eyeglass upon Mr. Gladstone, addressing him personally, enforcing his points with animated gestures, the Squire of Blankney rode upon the whirlwind and directed the storm.

"At the right hon. gentleman's door," he said, pointing across the floor at Mr. Gladstone, and turning round to meet the frantic cheering of friends behind him, "lies the whole responsibility of the European crisis."

Mr. Chaplin always amused Mr. Gladstone, and even this hard saying did not disturb the smiling equanimity with which he sat regarding

the heated orator. But there is a point at which forbearance, contemptuous or magnanimous, halts. Mr. Chaplin, intoxicated with the quite unusual cheering that punctuated his remarks, presently passed that point. "As a man of honour," he said with accusatory forefinger pointing at Mr. Gladstone, "there is only one course open to the right hon. gentleman."

Mr. Gladstone sprang to his feet with catapultic speed and force. From a seat behind him at the same moment rose Colonel Muir, who appealed to the Speaker to say how much further these personalities were to be carried. "I also rose," said Mr. Gladstone, "to ask whether I am to be instructed by an hon. member as to what is the only course I may take as a man of honour."

It was a peculiarity with Mr. Gladstone, never varied through the long succession of scenes above which his mighty figure towered, that once on his feet he, under whatever provocation, instantly regained self-command. To see him when he leaped up at the last touch of Mr. Chaplin's lash, his eyes blazing in his terrible white face, it was natural to suppose that he would break forth into tempestuous speech, his body rocked by angry gestures. Here he was standing at the table with arms hung limply down, putting a question of order to the Speaker in quiet conversational tone.

The Speaker, thus appealed to, ruled Mr. Chaplin out of order. He straightway withdrew the offending expression. But, he hotly added, now or at any more convenient time he would have pleasure in giving the right hon. gentleman opposite an opportunity of defending himself. "Move! move!" cried members behind. The sight of Mr. Gladstone sitting opposite acted on the gentlemen of England of that day much as a red flag waved in his face stirs an infuriate bull in the arena at Madrid. Carried away by the tumult, Mr. Chaplin bellowed—the word is historically Parliamentary—"I beg to move that this debate be now adjourned."

Mr. Gladstone having already spoken in the debate was precluded by the rules of the House from further contributing to it. Mr. Chaplin's motion, being in the form of an amendment, raised a new question, upon which members who had spoken earlier in the sitting might, if they pleased, deliver their souls. A wilder shout of applause went up from the Ministerialists. It was instantly stilled by discovery that Mr. Gladstone was standing at the table. "I beg to second the motion," he said in the same quiet voice that had marked his previous utterances.

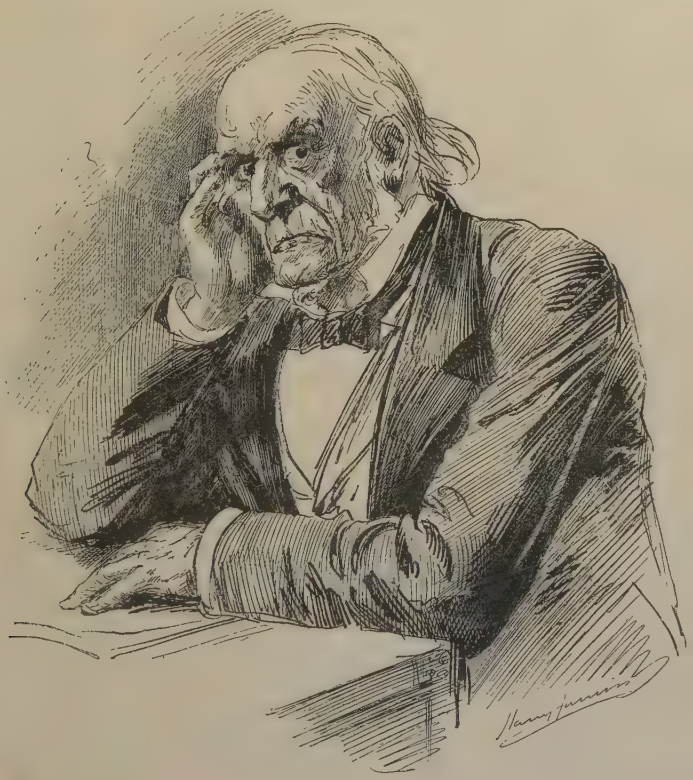
The cheers broke forth afresh, this time from the Opposition benches. Rarely had such quick dramatic movement taken place in Parliamentary debate. In the ordinary course some other member would have seconded the motion, the Speaker would have risen to put it from the chair, and Mr. Gladstone might, if he pleased, have interposed. That would have been a tame performance compared with this prompt picking up of the glove almost before it had touched the floor.

When the cheering was hushed Mr. Gladstone, speaking in a low voice, evidently agitated by profound emotion, protested against the insulting language addressed to him. After a little while he began to take a calmer, juster view of the real value of such turgid talk. He lapsed into his own familiar manner when dealing with Mr. Chaplin, and peal after peal of laughter rose from the crowded House as he lashed the irate orator with the finest, though not therefore the least painful, cords of irony.

He ended in a more serious mood, with a noble peroration, recalling to the House the gravity of the question out of which this personal incident had arisen.

Some time before his death Mr. Bright, talking to his son-in-law, Mr. Charles McLaren, made a shrewd criticism of Mr. Gladstone's style of oratory. "People say my mind is too subtle," Mr. Gladstone had remarked to his old friend with an air suggesting complaint that the charge was unjust. "I don't know what you mean by subtle," Mr. Bright had replied,

Gladstone and Bright compared.



INTERRUPTED.

"but I know what other people mean by it. Here is the chart of an argument. There are three or four prominent headlands. I dwell on them at length, and so do you. But you go into all the little creeks and bays and inlets, and enlarge on them with equal detail and elaboration, instead of bringing out the great promontories of your argument forcibly, and so your audience lose sight of them. When you use so many small arguments, people think you have no big ones. Those are not the arguments that convince people. I leave out the little creeks and dwell on the projecting headlands only. If I can convince a hearer on one of them, I have got him. But you dwell on small and great arguments alike."

There is much truth in this. It was a constitutional infirmity, the fruit of excessive intellectual capacity. Observing Mr. Gladstone on his feet in the House of Commons, confronting a difficulty suddenly sprung upon him, one understood how the habit grew. Cautious by temperament, subtle in distinction of the meaning of words, having in stock an illimitable quantity, he, as he proceeded, saw pitfalls, morasses, stone walls non-existent to ordinary vision. The involutions, parentheses, modifications of his, on the average, prodigiously long sentences, were divagations designed to get round or burrow under these, perhaps, imaginary dangers. Listening to him, one has often wondered where, on sea or land, a particular sentence would finally end. The closest attention was not equal to following all its tortuous turns. But when read in print it was perceived that Mr. Gladstone at least did not lose his way. Whilst he spoke he was thinking out the position. Being on his legs, he must need fill up the interval with words. These — "a cloud of vague, brilliant, and imposing verbiage"—were spun out till his active mind had arrived at a decision upon the precise line to take. Often at critical moments of foreign or home policy he has been suddenly assailed with an awkward question. An ordinary Minister thus cornered would take advantage of the formula that permits him to ask for notice. Mr. Gladstone never stooped to that expedient. He answered forthwith, sometimes at considerable length, and with apparent wealth of detailed information. But if he did not deem it expedient to take the House into his confidence, no embarrassment to the Ministry followed upon his reply. The embarrassment was rather with the questioner, who, straining his attention to follow the meaning and catch the cohesion of the well-ordered sentences welling in easy flood from the lips of the Premier, was painfully conscious of temporary brain paralysis. He could not in the thicket of words see a ray of light on the situation he had submitted. He had evidently missed a link, and would find it all right when he read in the morning papers a verbatim report of the answer. Studying that, he discovered that Mr. Gladstone, though he had talked for two or three minutes, had positively said nothing. Which was, indeed, his purpose.

"The only difference between him and me," said Mr. Bright in the conversation already quoted from, "is that he takes twice as long to say a thing as I do, and that he says twice as many things." Mr. Bryce carries on this personal comparison from another, perhaps more impartial, point of view. "Mr. Gladstone's speeches," he writes, "were neither so concisely telling as Mr. Bright's, nor so finished in diction. But no other man among his contemporaries—neither Lord Derby, nor Lowe, nor Mr. Disraeli, nor Bishop Wilberforce, nor Bishop Magee—deserved comparison with him. And he rose superior to Mr. Bright himself in readiness, in variety of knowledge, in persuasive ingenuity. Mr. Bright required time for preparation, and was always more successful in alarming his adversaries and stimulating his friends than in either instructing or convincing anybody. Mr. Gladstone could do all these four things, and could do them at an hour's notice, so vast and well-ordered was the arsenal of his mind."

This is sound criticism admirably put. Mr. Gladstone, having before him the task of delivering a speech on the intricacies of a Budget

scheme or the clauses of an epoch-making Bill, sketched out in advance the general line of his argument and illustration. But some of his most striking and successful speeches in the House of Commons have been delivered on the spur of the moment without a note of preparation. Nothing in the long and luminous array of his House of Commons speeches was more delightful than his Tuesday or Friday evening *causeries* towards the end of his Parliamentary career. At that time private members still had these nights at their disposal, and were able to utilise them for the discussion of miscellaneous questions. Mr. Gladstone, coming back probably after a morning sitting, would sit listening, obviously without settled purpose of taking part in the debate. Someone accidentally struck a chord of memory or association, and he was on his feet discoursing the most winning eloquence.

As Mr. Balfour aptly said in his speech proposing a public funeral, from the conversational discussion appropriate to committee work up to the most sustained eloquence fitting some high argument and some great historic occasion, every weapon of Parliament warfare was wielded by Mr. Gladstone with the sureness and ease of perfect, absolute, complete mastery. On whatever theme he spoke, upon whatever occasion, he poured out his very self upon his audience. It was a great soul, a lofty mind, an instrument incapable of striking a mean or faulty note. Through his long life and close association with the House of Commons he bestowed upon it by his speeches a boundless store of intellectual delight. Rarer guerdon still, he, by his very presence, by the spectacle of his pure life, his lofty aims, distinctly elevated the tone of the assembly.

"His voice is silent in your council hall
For ever; and whatever tempest lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for Power."

HENRY W. LUCY.

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# CHAPTER XIII.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S FIRST PREMIERSHIP, 1868-1874.

**The Issues at the General Election: Taxation and Finance; The Condition of Ireland; Land and Church—A Great Election Address—Financial Policy of the Conservatives—Decay of Economy—Charged with Promoting Popery—Co-operation—Local Taxation—A Campaign of Calumny—Tory Democracy—Justice to Ireland the Main Issue—Defeated in South Lancashire but Elected for Greenwich—The New Ministry—Conciliation for Ireland—The Irish Church—Report of a Royal Commission—Impossibility of Reform—The Disestablishment Bill Introduced—A Sop for Irish Landlords—The Surplus—The Bill Passed—Mr. Bright's Fling at the House of Lords—University Reform—Mr. Gladstone's Cabinets—A Meeting with Jowett—The Irish Land System—Irish Grievances—Ulster Tenant Right—The First Irish Land Bill—The Elementary Education Bill—Mr. Gladstone on the Franco-German War and European Politics—The Protection of the Pope—Release of Fenians—Civil Service Reforms—Woolwich Dockyard Closed—Foreign Affairs—The Ballot—The Match-Tax—Army Purchase—Home Rule—A Great Speech at Blackheath—Sir Robert Collier's Appointment—The Ewelme Case—Republicanism—The Ballot—The *Alabama* Claims—The Licensing Act—Archæology—The Irish University Bill—The Government Defeated—Disraeli refuses to take Office—More Misfortunes—Contemplating the Abolition of the Income-Tax—Parliament Dissolved.**

THE Ministry which Mr. Gladstone formed after the General Election of 1868, the greatest Peace Ministry of modern times, exhibits in its measures and its acts, in its legislation and its administration, a harmony, a unity, and an individuality which are never observed in collective bodies except when they are controlled by a master hand and are subordinated to a master mind. In one sense the narrative of the whole of Mr. Gladstone's public life up to this point is a history of the formation of the policy of his first Ministry. In a more immediate and determinate sense that policy dates from the election campaign of 1868. In South Lancashire Mr. Gladstone laid before the people in broad outline the great reforms which he afterwards proposed and carried through Parliament. He alone among the Prime Ministers of England was equally great as an administrator, a Parliamentary debater, and a platform orator. It is on the platform, when he comes into direct touch with the people, that he speaks his mind most freely; and if his speeches in the autumn of 1868 are among the most important in the history of English politics, they deserve equal weight and consideration in any attempt to estimate his personality.

Characteristics of the Ministry.

The appeal to the country was made and decided on three main questions—the history of the last Reform Act, public economy, and the Irish question. On the first, Disraeli's contemptible opportunism offered an easy target. On the last two it was necessary to educate and win over the people. Mr. Gladstone lost no time in opening the campaign. In his first speech—delivered at St. Helens on August 5th—he carefully selected the ground on which the great battle was to be fought and won. There was "the vital question of taxation and finance," the question as

The Issues at the General Election, 1868.

to what should be the scale of the military, naval, and civil estimates of the country in its regular service:—

"It is with very deep regret that I have to record the fact that since the change of Government which took place two years ago, with no sufficient justification that I am aware of, under no pressure from the country or the House of Commons, her Majesty's present advisers have thought it their duty to adopt measures and make proposals by which a sum of little less than three millions a year has been added to the permanent expenditure of the country." Taxation and Finance.

Mr. Gladstone advised the electors to invite Conservative candidates to go into this subject "very much at large,

and to explain in their own defence, and to your satisfaction, why it is and wherefore that after, for a series of five or six years, a Liberal Government of this country—which certainly was not supposed to be fanatically economical—had found the means of continually operating some reduction in the charges and burdens of the country, why it is that upon the accession of what is called a Conservative Government to power, it is suddenly discovered that the tide has turned, and that from month to month almost, as new estimates are produced, every estimate and every charge made upon you is in advance over and is in excess above those that had preceded it."

But even the question of economy faded into insignificance before what was at that juncture the question of paramount importance, namely, the policy to be pursued in respect of Ireland. Mr. Gladstone recalled the "painful sensations" with which, shortly after becoming a member of Earl Russell's Cabinet, he together with his colleagues became acquainted with those particulars which proved to them, at the beginning of 1866, that there was no choice but to ask for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and so place in abeyance, so far as Ireland was concerned, the principal guarantee of personal liberty. Many Irish emigrants had served as officers in the American Civil War, and they were known to be returning in large numbers "with the design of lighting, if they could, the flame of civil war in Ireland." The original suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland was for six months only; but it had now been renewed, not causelessly, for three years. The Tory Government might congratulate itself on the "tranquillity" of Ireland; not so the Opposition:— Ireland.

"We have looked at the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland with very different views. Do not conceal from yourselves this fact, that when you have arrived at the point at which you are compelled to place the guarantees of personal liberty in abeyance, you have arrived at a point only one stage removed from civil war . . . We thought it was our duty to look in the face this dark fact of Irish discontent . . . We asked ourselves whether, in this formidable state of things, we stood clear in the face of the Irish people and of the world; whether the laws and institutions which prevail in Ireland are such as ought to prevail; whether they are such as in the face of national danger we should ourselves think proper or be bold enough to maintain. If they are, maintain them by all means, maintain them at all hazards, though even civil war or foreign war should blaze throughout the land; but if they are not, then don't wait for the moment of civil war or of foreign war—nay, more, do not wait to continue from year to year the painful, the ignominious—I would almost say, the loathsome—process of suspending personal liberty in order to keep large portions of the Irish people down by force; do not be content with such a policy as this, but set right your laws and institutions. And when you have set them right, then, with a just confidence in the Almighty God who rules the affairs of men, you may abide whatever is in store."

The Irish question had many branches, but the two principal ones for the consideration of the coming Parliament would relate to the land and the Church. As to Irish land, it would be the duty of Parliament to legislate with a sincere desire and determination to secure to the Irish cultivator, "than whom no man is more tenderly attached to the soil on which he is born," the fruits of his industry, and enable him "to pursue his lot and his career in the land where the Almighty has ordained that he should be born, instead of looking for a home across the Atlantic." This security must be given "with the fullest regard to the rights of property." Mr. Gladstone was proceeding gradually to religious tenures when an impatient person called out "Irish Church!"—

"A friend in the extremity of the room calls out the 'Irish Church,' and I assure him that he only anticipated me by one single moment. But as he has said 'The Irish Church,' I will read you a few words from the writings of a very distinguished and eminent man, the present Lord Lytton, who I believe says as follows:—'We talk of "Irish bulls," but the words "Irish Church" are the greatest bull in the language. It is called the Irish Church because it is a church not for the Irish.' I cannot deny that proposition of Lord Lytton's; I wish I could. A member of the Church of England myself, I should be very glad indeed if my Irish fellow-countrymen were disposed to take the same view of matters with me; but they are not. I cannot constrain them, and I must consider, while I would exact a jealous regard for our rights who are members of the Church of England, or of any other religious body, I must ask myself whether we have paid the same regard to the rights of the masses of the Irish people."

The Irish Church.

A Commission which had been sitting had incubated a scheme for reforming the Irish Church; upon which Mr. Gladstone remarked, "You cannot make bricks without straw, and you cannot take the breeks off a Highlander. There are many things impossible, and it is impossible to make a reform of the Irish Church." Still there were plenty of Conservative candidates abroad who would sell the electors plans of Irish Church Reform—as many as they liked to buy—"for the moderate price of their political support." But these schemes of the reform of the Irish Church were like the razors that were carried to a certain fair, with respect to which the man who had them said they were not made to shave, but they were made to sell. The experiment proposed was not new; it had been tried before:—

"We tried it in 1833. In 1833 we cut off ten bishops, and we pitched them out of the carriage to the wolves, just in the same way as in Russia it sometimes happens, I am told, that a carriage going post over the plains, with a number of horses to draw it at full gallop, is pursued by a herd of wolves, and the common practice is to cut off now one horse and then another, turning them loose from the traces, in the hope that the wolves will fasten upon them and allow the carriage to escape. That is the way we did with the ten bishops in 1833, and for a considerable time the wolves fed upon those ten bishops; but they are now in full course again, and it is said that the Commission that has been sitting is going to recommend a repetition of the very same experiment, not on so liberal a scale, but they are going to advise that we should throw overboard four bishops, in the hope that the wolves will be satisfied for a short time by devouring their carcases. Now, I don't want to throw over bishops at all. I am for letting every religious communion have as many bishops as they please, or as their reasonable necessities require, of which they must be the ultimate judges. But rely upon it, I don't exaggerate when I say that the day for changes of this kind is gone."

In short, there were only two plans: that to which Mr. Gladstone had committed himself and the party, and that towards which Mr. Disraeli had

been manœuvring in the spring—until he decided to plump for the Anglican vote—when he said that he had a great objection to levelling down, but none to levelling up. "You have but two plans really to choose between, and you must make your option. You will either have to take away the Irish Church Establishment as we recommend, or else you must build up some others beside it." It would be objected, of course, that the destruction of the Establishment would involve the reproach of "acting in concert with the Roman Catholic population of Ireland. My answer to that is this: We are combined irrespective of religious persuasion for the purpose of recognising and acknowledging, for the purpose of accomplishing and working out, a design which is founded on principles of natural and civil justice, such as all Christians—nay, such as all men—ought to acknowledge."

On October 2nd Disraeli issued an address to the electors of Bucks on the transient efforts of the philosopher and the sectarian. He would take upon himself to guard the Irish Establishment because "the connection of religion with the exercise of political authority is one of the main safeguards of the civilisation of man." A week later came the counterblast from Hawarden, a formidable document which shall be given nearly in full, not only because it was in itself characteristic of the man and worthy of the statesman, but on account of another peculiar feature. The promises were few, and they were performed. Disraeli followed the usual rule, and sowed his seed strictly with a view to the General Election. His rival looked through and forward to the time when his hopeful projects should prove good on the Parliamentary threshing-floor. The manifesto begins as follows:

**Disraeli Champions the Irish Church.**

**A Great Election Address, 1868.**

"TO THE ELECTORS OF SOUTH-WEST LANCASHIRE.

"GENTLEMEN,—From you, the electors of the South-western Division of the County of Lancaster, I solicit a renewal of the trust which was confided to me in 1865, in a manner demanding from me peculiar gratitude, by the Constituency of the entire Southern Division.

"I then came before you as the advocate of a policy of trust in the people, tempered by prudence, and averse to violent and hasty change.

"In the spirit of that profession, I was a party in 1866 to proposals for the extension of the franchise, which I thought the smallest that could meet the just claims of the unenfranchised classes, and which were studiously limited in order if possible to disarm jealousy, prejudice, and fear.

"We were met by an opposition, not indeed as direct, but yet as persevering and detrimental, as was ever offered to any measure. At length a point was reached at which the Government of Earl Russell found that the resignation of their offices appeared to be the most becoming method by which they could secure the early triumph of Reform.

"We resigned accordingly. The result was that the opponents of reduction in the franchise took office, and found themselves compelled by the public sentiment, after much vacillation, to make proposals on that subject which, though not only narrow, but strongly reactionary in the shape in which they were presented to Parliament, issued in the passing of a measure larger and more democratic than the Bill which, in 1866, we were told, by the highest authority, would reduce our institutions to the pattern of the American Republic.

"From the extensive, though unequal, enfranchisement which has thus been secured for the people, past experience and all present signs lead me to anticipate increased strength for our institutions, and a more vigorous march, both of legislative and administrative policy. . . .

"The rapid growth of wealth, especially among the classes of the greatest activity and enterprise, has led, for a number of years past, to a diminished watchfulness, outside the walls of Parliament, respecting the great and cardinal subject of economy in the public charges, and the relation between the income of the State and its expenditure. I earnestly desire that the paramount interest of the lately enfranchised classes in thrifty administration may operate powerfully to bring about a change. This tendency cannot but be strengthened by the present decline of the permanent revenue, and by the addition, since the present Government took office, of three millions (in round numbers) to the public charges, apart from the demands of the Abyssinian War. This increase has extended not less in the civil than in the military and naval departments. In my opinion it has not been justified either by the wishes of the country or by the demands of the public service.

**Public Economy.**

"I perceive, with satisfaction, that attention has of late been increasingly directed to the local charges of the country. Their amount, the manner of their incidence, and the means provided for their administration and control appear to demand careful consideration. It will, in my opinion, be just and politic to allow to ratepayers, by the principle of representation, a control over county expenditure."

A paragraph on Primary Education followed. Mr. Gladstone referred to the two principles laid down by Lord John Russell in 1839 on behalf of Lord Melbourne's Government—that it was the desire of her Majesty that the rights of conscience "should be respected, and that the youth of the country should be religiously brought up." Further legislation would be necessary to establish the first of these principles, and in order to enforce it the State must resign the responsibility of teaching in its primary schools a sect at the expense of the nation. The address then proceeds:—

**Primary Education.**

"At this time one question, or group of questions, overshadows all the rest. The state of Ireland, and the actual temper of no small portion of its people towards the Throne and Government of the United Kingdom, imperatively demand the care of all public men, and of all good citizens, who would seek, not merely to live by expedients from day to day, but, looking onwards into the future, to make provision, as far as human means avail, for the strength, concord, and stability of the Empire.

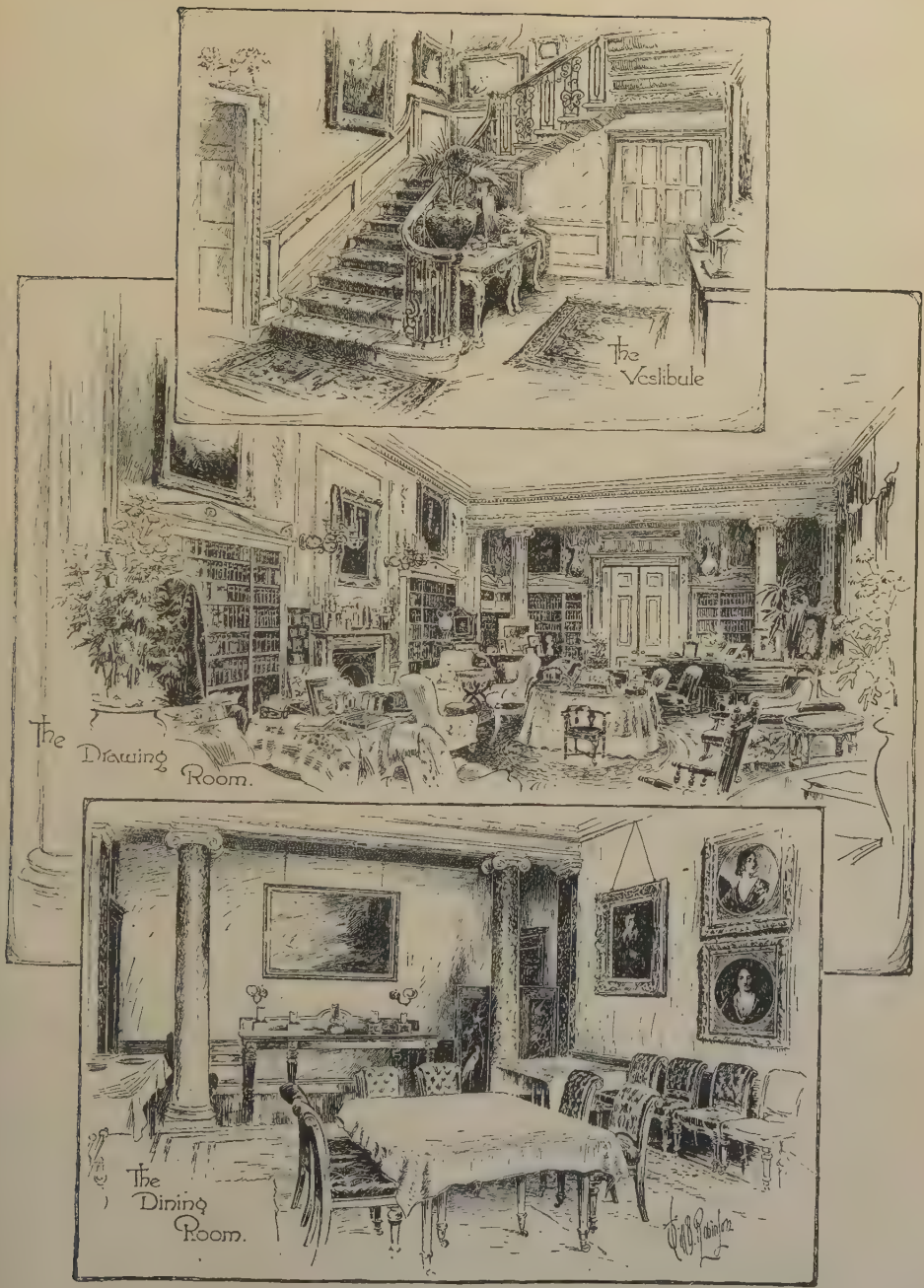
"The object of a truly Liberal policy is by equitable but decided measures to make the name of law in Ireland respected as it is in Great Britain; to make it respected by making it loved; and to create this attachment by creating in the national mind the conviction that law is a friend and not an enemy; the friend of every class, but especially of those classes which have the greatest need of its protection.

"The present House of Commons has four times been called upon to suspend the Act for securing personal liberty in Ireland; but it has not forgotten the work of improvement in that country.

"In 1866, the Government of Earl Russell addressed itself to one absolutely vital portion of this work, by introducing a Land Bill, for securing to tenants the value of their improvements, which the obstruction of the Ministers now in power prevented from passing into law.

"But this year, those Ministers, rightly judging that the necessity of coercion did not impair the obligations of justice, very deliberately proposed a policy for Ireland; did not shrink from the questions of Education and Religion; asked to establish, at the charge of the Exchequer, a Roman Catholic University; and declared their readiness to recognise the principle of religious equality in Ireland by a great change in the status of the unendowed clergy of that country, provided always that the Established Church should be maintained in its integrity. In this statement, for the sake of accuracy, I have adhered as nearly as may be to the language which they used.

"We thought that Ministers had mistaken alike the interests and the convictions of the country. We refused to open a new source of discord through the establishment by the State of any denominational university. We repudiated the policy of universal endowment.




*Photos; Cassell and Co., Lim.*

HAWARDEN CASTLE INTERIORS.

But, agreeing with the Government that the subject was ripe, we proposed a counterplan of disestablishment of the existing Church, with strict regard to the rights of property and to vested interests, but without establishing any other Church, and with a general cessation of State endowments for religion in Ireland."

The Irish Church.

Then came an indictment of the Irish Church. "Every argument which can now be used in favour of civil establishment of religion is a satire on the existence of this Church." It was not surprising that the relative number of Protestants in Ireland had declined since the repeal of the Penal Laws. The Established Church was the Church of a minority of the nation. But its members were not the poor; they were the rich, the well-educated, the powerful. Its funds were misappropriated. Its existence was a standing memorial of the oppression of the past. Its constitution embittered theological controversies, and brought the polemical spirit into politics.

"In the removal of this Establishment," the address continues, "I see the discharge of a debt of civil justice, the disappearance of a national, almost a world-wide reproach, a condition indispensable to the success of every effort to secure the peace and contentment of that country; finally, relief to a devoted clergy from a false position, cramped and beset by hopeless prejudice, and the opening of a freer career to their sacred ministry . . . .

"In the manner of proceeding, we ought, I think, to be governed by three considerations: a regard for Irish interests and feelings; an enlarged equity towards those who would lose in point of civil privilege; and a careful heed to the spirit of equal dealing throughout the detailed arrangements.

"After all that these rules can warrant has been done, there may remain a considerable property at the disposal of the State. The mode of its application can only, in my judgment, be suggested to Parliament by those who as a Government may have means and authority to examine fully the provisions now made by law for the various public and social wants of Ireland, and to compare in each case both the urgency of the demand and the facility of meeting it with general satisfaction. It would, however, ill consist with the principle of the measure for which we are now contending, if the State, having disestablished the Church, were to apply its funds to the teaching of religion in any other form.

"To sum up this great subject—

"Rest as we are, by common consent, we cannot. Endowment of all, after the events of the last Session, is out of the question. Retrenchment or mutilation of the existing Church, by reduction of its spiritual offices, has been proposed by a Royal Commission; but I do not learn from the latest and most authentic declarations of the Ministry that they adopt that, or indeed any other, method of proceeding. We of the Opposition, Gentlemen, have done our part. The matter now rests with you. One path, at least, lies before you, broad, open, and well defined. One policy has advocates who do not shrink from its avowal. It is the policy of bringing absolutely to an end the civil establishment of the Church of Ireland. It has received the solemn sanction of the representatives whom the nation chose in 1865. For this line of action, the only one just, and the only one available, I confidently ask your approval."

The war had now begun in earnest. In the course of five weeks, Mr. Gladstone delivered speeches at Warrington, Liverpool, Overton, Southport, Ormskirk,' Wigan, Bootle, Garston, Widnes, and Preston. The Warrington speech is in some respects the most remarkable of the whole series. He had been criticised for the language he had used at St. Helen's on the subject of public expenditure; and a pack of mendacious financial placards had been put about the country by the enemy. It was thought that he might qualify or retract. Never was a greater error. "I intend, on the contrary, both to corroborate and to enlarge the assertions I have

made." Counter-statements had been brought forward, asserting the superior economy of the Conservative Government and of the Conservative party. First then for the policy of the Conservatives when in opposition. It might be supposed from the election addresses that they had either done their best to restrain expenditure, or at least remained silent in the matter. Whereas the fact was that of the questions asked and the motions proposed with a view of forcing the Government into a higher expenditure, "three-fourths, or perhaps nine-tenths . . . proceeded from the Conservative party then sitting on the benches of the Opposition."

Financial Policy of the Conservatives in Opposition.

Again, as to the expenditure of the Conservatives in office. Let them consider the case of the Abyssinian War. The estimate in March was that it would cost five millions. That was said by the Government to be an outside estimate, and the war was then practically at a conclusion. "But I am told that we shall have another bill to pay." Then there was a still graver question. Three millions had been added in a couple of years to the permanent expenditure. What was the apology for this rapid augmentation of the public charges? "Efficiency." But experience had shown that, whenever there is a disposition to spend money, some great authority appears and pronounces that the services are not efficient, and as soon as the money is spent, some other authority comes forward and says the same: and so you are led round and round in a delusive circle. Efficiency, therefore, was a plea that ought not to be admitted without a great deal of careful scrutiny. One of the three millions had been spent upon the Civil Service, and for this the defence which had been set up by the friends of the Government was that there were new wants which required to be met:—

And in Office.

"Of course there were. Who supposes that in a country that spends seventy millions every year, or sixty-five millions—it is now, I am sorry to say, beyond seventy—who supposes that of that seventy millions every farthing is always applied to the same purposes? You cannot stereotype the wants of a great empire. New wants are always coming forward; but where there are new wants and where provision is made for those new wants, that provision ought to be greatly counterbalanced by new economies."

But the "new wants" which the Government had been so precipitate in meeting were not always, or even generally, supplied upon these high imperial grounds of efficiency and security. So far, at any rate, as the civil expenditure was concerned, "I affirm this, that they have adopted a system which was once applied in a different sense—but the phrase is a very expressive one—they have adopted a system of what is called making things pleasant all round." And Mr. Gladstone drove the accusation home by reference to the specific case of a Conservative M.P. whose address to the electors and appeal for the continuance of their favours was modelled round the great fact that a public loan to the town of £20,000, which the Government of Earl Russell had refused to remit, had been remitted by the Government of Mr. Disraeli upon payment of the sum of £2,500. As a matter of principle, however, the blame was not to be laid exclusively upon the existing Administration. A philosophic observer of public affairs

Making Things Pleasant all Round.

Decay of Economy.

both within and without the walls of the House of Commons could not but be sensible of two truths—in the first place, that the people are the natural defenders of their own purses, and in the second place, that the vigilance with which the public mind had at some former periods been directed to the control of public expenditure was then greatly relaxed. But without the aid of public opinion no Government, however well disposed to economy, would be able to keep the expenditure of the country within moderate bounds.

If Mr. Gladstone could have made the election turn upon public economy he would probably have saved his own seat in South Lancashire. But the Irish question, of course, overshadowed all others, and the upper and middle classes in Lancashire, from which the county voters were drawn, entertained so hearty a dislike for the Irish emigrants that they were inclined to be unenthusiastic and even unfriendly towards Irish reforms.

**Unpopularity of Irish Questions.**

Mr. Gladstone returned to the question again and again. But it is noticeable that in most of his platform speeches during this campaign he began with some popular topic and only passed on to Irish questions when he had completely won over his audience. Thus at a great meeting in the Liverpool Amphitheatre on October 14th he devoted his first hour to the subject of Reform, and especially to the manœuvres of Disraeli in 1867. Nothing could have been better than his description of Disraeli's Bill, nothing clearer than his exposition of the process by which the Opposition got rid of five principles and ten objections, and finally transformed fancy franchises into household suffrage. The Bill was one thing—it would actually have reduced the influence of the working classes—the Act was quite another thing. Nevertheless the provisions about the compound householder, even as amended, were complicated, and Mr. Gladstone promised, "if he were a member of the Parliament about to be elected," that one of his first steps should be to put the matter right.

A few days later, at Leigh, Mr. Gladstone spoke in the weaving-shed of the Co-operative Mills. It was noticed as an unusual occurrence that the voters brought their wives and daughters to this meeting, and that "the scene had a much more pleasing character in consequence." Mr. Gladstone naturally began with Co-operation, and his remarks upon the system are very interesting though elaborately cautious. He thought that a good deal of very needless alarm was felt about the relations between Capital and Labour, for he had sufficient confidence in the good sense of his countrymen to feel sure that they would find their way through the meshes and mazes of that problem to a satisfactory solution:—

**Co-operation.**

"Gentlemen, certainly one class of measures to which I look with the greatest interest for the purpose of helping in the attainment of that solution are the measures which, without removing the labouring man from the class of labouring men, nevertheless give him some of the sentiments and some of the interest of the capitalist. Do not suppose from what I have said that I am one who believes that the function of the retail tradesman, of the distributor of commodities, can be either permanently or beneficially supplanted. That I do not believe. I believe that the union of working men among themselves in Co-operative Societies may perhaps be highly beneficial as a check upon that more ordinary method of manufacture through great capitalists, and of distribution through wholesale and retail tradesmen; but that it will supplant these

methods I, for one, wholly disbelieve. And, gentlemen, I think it but fair to say two things. On the one hand, I am convinced it is only in a very advanced state of the labour or wage-earning classes that Co-operation can be at all possible or advantageous to them; and therefore, whenever I see it producing locally a good effect, I rejoice in it, mainly as a proof that in that particular neighbourhood the labouring class is greatly advanced. But, upon the other hand, the risks and responsibilities of joint-stock enterprise are serious. I must own to you that although, ever since my mind was given to commercial subjects, I have been, I hope, a pretty steady adherent to the principles of Free Trade, yet I never have had that universal faith in the principle of joint-stock as distinguished from individual agency and enterprise which I believe has been entertained by many far greater authorities than myself. I hope, therefore, that the greatest caution will ever be exercised by the labouring classes with regard to the management of joint-stock enterprise; and I may add, and justly add, a like hope for all other classes. But whenever joint-stock enterprise among workmen succeeds I heartily rejoice in it, and bid them 'God speed.'"

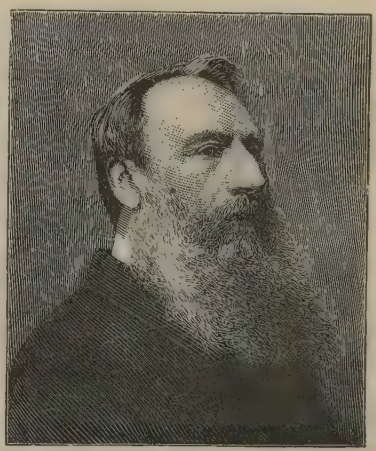


*Photo: Bassano, Old Bond St., W.*

A. J. MUNDELLA.

There was, however, another plan, free from the dangers of Co-operation pure and simple, to which he would wish an unqualified prosperity. It was to be found in those cases "where a private individual, or a limited number of private individuals in a firm carrying on their business on the principle of private enterprise are enabled by their skill so to adjust their operations and their accounts that they contrive to give to their workpeople an interest in their profits."

Another method of dealing with labour difficulties which Mr. Gladstone spoke of with hearty and unrestricted approval was the appointment of joint-boards of conciliation. This method had been promoted chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Mundella, and had already produced "most happy results."

On the following day (October 21st) at Southport Mr. Gladstone summed up his financial criticisms with admirable force and brevity:—

"The increase of expenditure which has taken place from 1866 to 1868 has not been called for by any demand of public opinion. The Ministers have turned us from the ebbing tide of expenditure to the flowing tide of expenditure, and they have done that by their own act, and from their own view, in despite of many remonstrances upon points of great importance from the Opposition, and without the slightest pressure from the people at large."

So far Mr. Gladstone had only spoken of Imperial expenditure. But there was a collateral subject—the question of local expenditure and taxation. It was not an attractive subject. Its difficulty and complexity had, as he said, repelled economists and publicists. No one understood it; it could hardly be made to appeal to the popular imagination. It was simply an important public question which demagogues and oligarchs had consistently avoided for different but equally discreditable reasons. The reform of the municipal corporations in 1835 had initiated a great improvement in the

**Local Taxation and Expenditure.**

quality and a great increase in the quantity of corporate local enterprise. But the principles of the Municipal Corporations Act had not yet been applied to the counties, or even to London; and in the wretched mixture of anomalies which, after three decades of reform, were still deplorably numerous, no straightforward policy or leading principle seemed yet to have emerged. It is not the least among Mr. Gladstone's many titles to a reputation for the highest statesmanship that he recognised the importance of this question, found time even at the busiest period of his life to study it, at least in outline, and by sheer force of will and intellect pushed, or rather jostled, it over the line into the region of practical politics. For the purposes of popular exposition he selected one glaring anomaly, and intimated the remedy which ought to be applied. "Taxation implies representation: let us actualise this principle in the county as well as in the borough" is practically all that he says The task which had baffled so many, and which was shortly to be entrusted fruitlessly to the ingenuity and industry of Mr. Goschen, was presented to the people of Ormskirk, not as an economic and legal puzzle, but as a simple and obvious reform which had long been contemplated.

"A Jesuit in Disguise."

The proposal to disestablish the Church of Ireland offered an opportunity to Mr. Gladstone's enemies of which they did not hesitate to avail themselves. His religious convictions were invaded; his sincerity was questioned; his loyalty to the Church of England was denied; the vulgar and the superstitious were informed that he was a Jesuit in disguise. From the moment when the Irish Church Resolutions were proposed down to the General Election, the traitor was denounced in the pulpit and the Press. On Good Friday a clergyman in North Shropshire told his congregation that those who voted with Mr. Gladstone in the division on the Irish Church instead of voting with Mr. Disraeli, virtually said "Not this man, but Barabbas." Mr. Gladstone had to deny that his policy was the result of a preconcerted arrangement with the Pope; he had to deny that when at Balmoral he had refused to attend worship at the Presbyterian Church. As the elections came nearer, calumnies multiplied.* He was accused of the most contemptible meanness, of deriving income from the revenues of a church at Seaforth, to which as a matter of fact he was a generous and constant subscriber. At last public considerations forced him to speak.† No subject could have been more distasteful. Even so, he would not enter upon the "nauseous catalogue" of "sheer falsehoods." But, as he explained with indignant pathos, something must be said. "For weeks past not a single day, not a single morning, have I risen to open my letters without finding the most earnest and energetic appeals from all portions of the country to encounter accusations of this description." His enemies in the division seem to have thought that they were on safe ground when they accused him of trying to introduce Roman ritual in the Church of England, and someone had been put up to ask him whether he would support a Bill to repress ritualistic innovations:—

"I have no doubt that the gentleman who puts the question, and those on whose behalf he says he writes it, have put it in good faith; because, if we were to quibble as to the

* See an indignant letter from Mr. Gladstone in the *Times*, November 9th, 1868.
† At Bootle, November 13th, 1868.

meaning of the word Ritual or Ritualism, each man means something that he, the individual man, happens to disapprove. Of course there is no satisfaction in dealing with ambiguous words, any more than there is in passing forged shillings and half-crowns, which have no virtue and are of no value whatever; but I lay down these two principles as sound—first, that this is not the place where I am to pronounce any censure or disapproval of anything in the religious profession or practice of any portion of the Christian world. There is a place for that; such things have their place. Everything is good in its place, and nothing is good out of its place; and therefore I enter into no question of religious controversy; but I cannot hesitate to say that the deliberate circulation of the professions and practices of another religious communion in the Church of England, contrary to the law and spirit of the Church of England, is a grave and serious evil to which it is quite right that the attention of the public and the State should be directed, and which it is desirable to put down by persuasion and moral means if it be possible; but if that be not possible, then in the last resort by the unbending authority of the law."

Mr. Gladstone then gave a very striking and very beautiful definition of "Ritualism in a bad sense." "What I understand by Ritualism in a bad sense is this—whatever in the sacred and solemn worship of God comes between the soul of man and his Almighty Father and his Redeemer in Heaven in such a way as not to elevate and raise his feeble faculties towards the contemplation of the eternal and supreme, but to bar him from it—that, in my opinion, is Ritualism." **A Definition of Ritualism.**

A less successful attempt to obtain an *ipse dixit* from Mr. Gladstone was made by the advocates of female suffrage. He was quite ready to admit that a change was gradually coming; that large numbers of women were attaining economic independence; but he refused to give any pledges, and plainly was not enamoured of the doctrines which had been promulgated by John Stuart Mill and adopted as a safe platform subject, with other remote changes, by young Tory democrats. Indeed, there is much truth as well as satire in the contrast which Mr. Gladstone drew between his own policy of reform and the revolutionary tendencies which were beginning to creep in among the ranks of his opponents.* **Female Suffrage.** **Tory Democracy.**

It has been necessary to consider at some length the principal topics of Mr. Gladstone's speeches to his constituents in 1868 because, seen in the light of history, they do undoubtedly stand out as his greatest practical achievement in public oratory. Here was a statesman thinking aloud, an orator persuading the people, an administrator describing his methods, a legislator sketching out a five years' course of legislation. And the strangest thing of all is that when the biographer has described the speeches of the autumn of 1868 he has written the political history of the United Kingdom in the five years which followed!

It would be a mistake to imagine that because Mr. Gladstone introduced a variety of topics into his speeches there was any lack of unity in his programme. Important as were the questions of local government, public economy, and amendment of the franchise, they were all subsidiary to the main issue of justice to Ireland:— "You, gentlemen, may, if you like, take upon yourselves the responsibility and the scandal of continuing to drag Ireland behind the chariot wheels of Great Britain, as if she were a captive country; but **Justice to Ireland.**

* See a speech at Wigan on the 23rd October, 1868.

we will have no part of the responsibility." Such was the strain in which Mr. Gladstone urged that the new policy of conciliation should be substituted for the old policy of coercion; and at times his enthusiasm, his moral force, and the fierce conviction that he was in the right bore down upon his audience in resistless torrents of eloquence.*

Mr. Gladstone was beaten in South Lancashire, both the two Conservative candidates, Mr. (afterwards Viscount) Cross and Mr. Turner, being returned by small majorities. In three years Mr. Gladstone had progressed too far for the clipped Liberalism of a county electorate. The party organisers had seen the danger, however; and Mr. Gladstone had been nominated for Greenwich, where he was elected by an overwhelming majority. But the result in South Lancashire was a severe disappointment to him. He had been deceived by the enthusiasm of the great, but unenfranchised, majority of the people in the district. He had told the electors on nomination day, in reply to the accusation that he was seeking another seat—

Elected for Greenwich.

"I have not spoken a word, I have not drawn a scratch of the pen, to obtain any other seat in Parliament than yours. And now the question for you gentlemen is, when the voice of the nation sounds in your ears, and speaks in accents which not even Mr. Turner or Mr. Cross can misunderstand . . . I ask you not to separate yourselves from the body of the nation. You are part of England. You are great; but England is greater. With England Scotland joins, and with Scotland Ireland."

In the country generally the Liberal party won a victory which did not fall short of its leader's enthusiastic hopes. Every part of the United Kingdom returned him a majority, and it was estimated that in the new House of Commons the Conservatives would be in a minority of 115. "We take our time from Greenwich," as one of his supporters remarked. Mr. Disraeli recognised the situation and took the then unprecedented step of resigning without awaiting the reassembling of Parliament. It is not surprising that many personal recollections go back to the first crowded hours of this the most glorious period in Mr. Gladstone's public life. We shall be content with two:—

"One afternoon of November,† 1868, in the park at Hawarden, I was standing by Mr. Gladstone holding his coat on my arm while he in his shirt sleeves was wielding an axe to cut down a tree. Up came a telegraph messenger. He took the telegram and read it, then handed it to me, speaking only two words, namely, 'Very significant,' and at once resumed his work. The message merely stated that General Grey would arrive that evening from Windsor. This, of course, implied that a mandate was coming from the Queen charging Mr. Gladstone with the formation of his first Government. I said nothing, but waited while the well-directed blows resounded in regular cadence. After a few minutes the blows ceased, and Mr. Gladstone, resting on the handle of his axe, looked up, and with deep earnestness in his face, exclaimed: 'My mission is to pacify Ireland.' He then resumed his task, and never said another word till the tree was down."‡

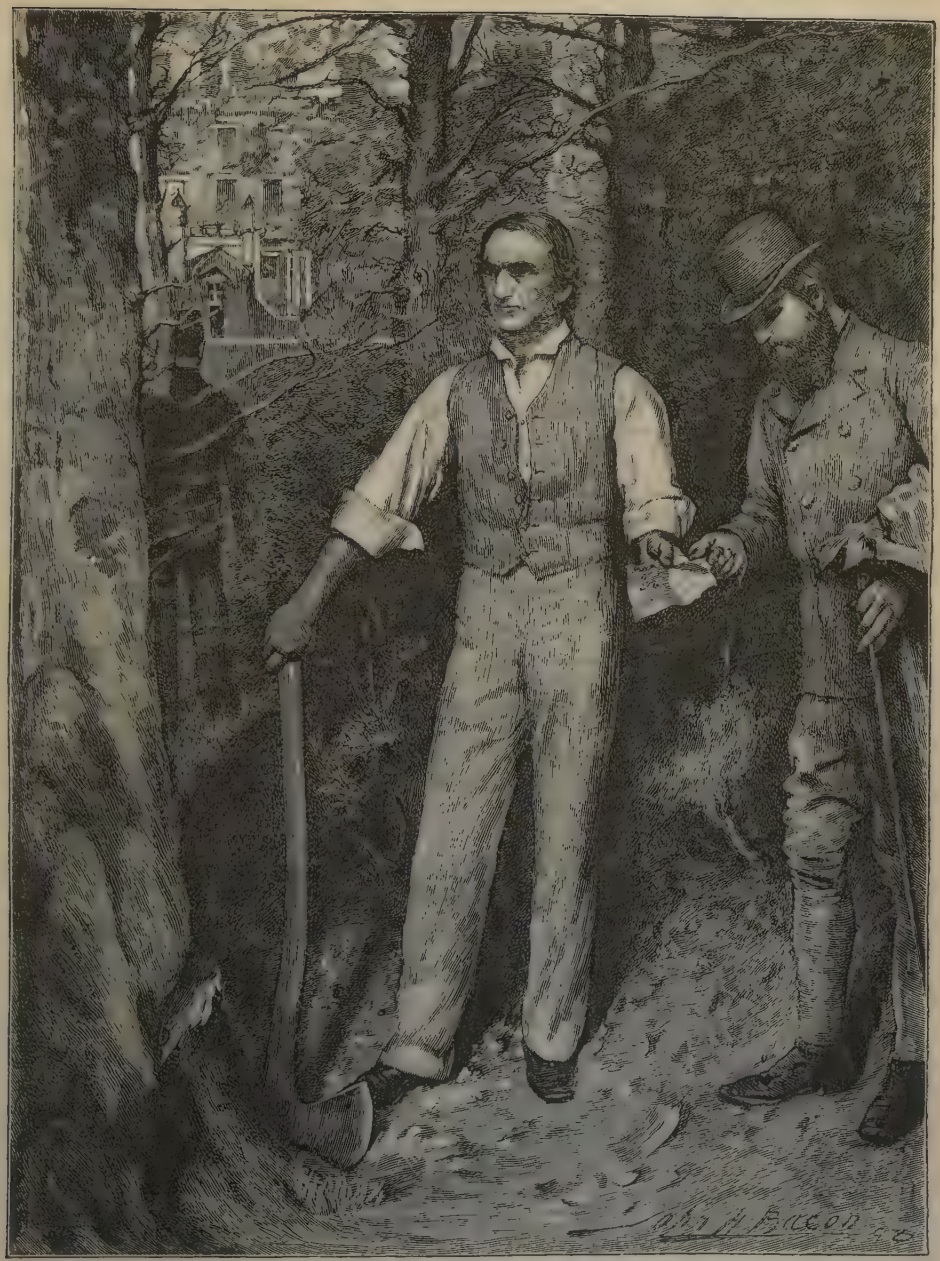
The other recollection may be read in a sermon preached by the Bishop of St. Andrews in St. Peter's, Eaton Square, on May 22nd, 1898:—

"I like to recall him as I saw him myself thirty years ago in a little church in

* *E.g.* at Southport, October 21st, 1868. It is noticeable that in this as in other speeches during the campaign, Mr. Gladstone again began to call himself a Protestant—for the first time, I believe, since 1836.

† December 4th was the exact date.

‡ A recollection by the Right Hon. Evelyn Ashley. *National Review*, June, 1898.



MR. GLADSTONE RECEIVING A TELEGRAM FROM WINDSOR CASTLE.

another part of London, when he had been suddenly summoned by his Sovereign for the first time to undertake the momentous work of forming a Cabinet that was to direct the destinies of this great Empire. I remember him coming, as he always did on every emergency, great or small, to receive the life of Christ at the holy table. I see him now kneeling there. Communicants went up and came back, but he remained absorbed, evidently, in communion with his Saviour. He was there till the end of the service. He had lost all thought of man."

The New Ministry, 1868.

On December 9th the new Ministers received the seals of office. The composition of the Government is interesting. It was formed upon what may be called the theory of exclusion, as the Government of 1880 was formed upon what may be called the theory of inclusion. In the December of 1868 Mr. Gladstone, generally speaking, only invited those upon whose support and sympathy he could rely, to join his Cabinet. Doubtful Whigs like the Duke of Somerset were left to hesitate their dislike in the cold. Several Radicals and Republicans, among whom Sir Charles Dilke and the late Professor Fawcett soon made themselves conspicuous by displays of independence, were left upon the flank. Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Vernon Harcourt, who had already made a great name by his letters to the *Times* on international law, and who had helped to canvass South Lancashire in 1865, was invited on this, the first occasion of his entering Parliament, to join the Liberal Ministry as Queen's Advocate. The invitation was not accepted.

Leading Members of the Cabinet.

Some of the chief offices were assigned with the intention of securing that rigid national economy which Mr. Gladstone had promised should be one of the first objects of his administration. Mr. Lowe, who had written a magazine criticism of one of the great Budget speeches, and had thereby created in Mr. Gladstone's mind a perhaps exaggerated impression of his financial powers, was created Chancellor of the Exchequer. The appointment was not popular in the party. It seemed too magnificent a reward for the brilliant rebellion of 'sixty-six. The immediate end was attained. Great pressure was applied from the Treasury with a view to enforcing economy in the other departments of the State. But Lowe had not the Gladstonian art of saving money without incurring odium. The same policy was followed in the appointment of Mr. Cardwell to the War Office and of Mr. Childers to the Admiralty. Cardwell had been trained in the administrative discipline of Peel. Childers had ingratiated himself by careful study and a not too independent advocacy of public parsimony. The intended reconstitution of local bodies and reform of local taxation was foreshadowed by the promotion of Mr. Goschen to the Poor Law Board. The names of Forster, Stansfeld, and Shaw Lefevre are also honourably connected with Mr. Gladstone's Administration and with the pursuit of public economy. Sympathy with Ireland and knowledge of Irish conditions fitted Mr. Chichester Fortescue (who was created Lord Carlingford in 1874) for the Chief Secretaryship in an Administration whose main purpose was to conciliate Ireland by the redress of her grievances.

But the appointment which created the greatest sensation—though it produced the least practical results—was that of Mr. Bright to the Presidency of the Board of Trade. Mr. Bright had been aptly described

by Mr. Gladstone himself as "the great standing habitual bugbear" of the Country Party. The current notion was that the men who had hitherto borne office in Liberal Governments were mere shadows, "that the real man was Mr. Bright, that he rode over them roughshod, and that whatever he ordered they had no business except to execute."* Long afterwards Mr. Gladstone explained what a difficult task it had been to induce the great Quaker to take office. Speaking of "the extraordinary efforts which were required to induce Mr. Bright under any circumstances to become a servant of the Crown," Mr. Gladstone recalled his first experience:— Mr. Bright.

"It was in the crisis of 1868 with regard to the Irish Question, and when especially the fate of the Irish Church hung in the balance, that it was my duty to propose to Mr. Bright that he should become a Cabinet Minister. I do not know that I can ever undertake so difficult a task, but this I do know, that from eleven o'clock at night until one o'clock in the morning we steadily debated that subject, and it was only at the last moment that it was possible for me to set aside the repugnance he had felt to doing anything which might, in the eyes of anyone, even of the more ignorant of his fellow-countrymen, appear to depart in the slightest degree from that lofty independence of character which he had heretofore maintained, and which, I will venture to say, never, to the end of his career, was for a moment lowered."†

*Photo: Maull and Fox, Piccadilly, W.*
HUGH C. E. CHILDERS IN 1868.

There was one important omission, but that was only surprising to those who were not behind the scenes. The name of Charles Villiers was conspicuous by its absence.

Speaking generally, the Ministry was remarkable for its unity and homogeneity. Most of its members were energetic, and anxious to distinguish themselves. From the Prime Minister, the Vesuvius of the Administration, emanated the main stream of lava which poured over Ireland, levelling or reducing the rough places of landlord law and Protestant privilege. But Mr. Gladstone was surrounded by minor yet active volcanoes, whose eruptions, often inopportune and ineffective, proved in some cases more disastrous to the Government than to the "interests" and abuses which they threatened and attacked. Homogeneity of the Government.

For the biographer the great and overpowering interest of this Mr. Gladstone's first Administration, springs from the circumstance that he had brought himself to face the problem of Irish suffering and Irish discontent in a new spirit, that he introduced a new system and a new policy, which included the redress of grievances as well as the suppression of outrages. Unhappily it is to a large extent true that, from a political standpoint, conciliation came too late to fulfil his sanguine expectations. Conciliation for Ireland.

* See Mr. Gladstone's speech at Bootle, November 13th, 1868.
† Hansard, March 29th, 1889.

When Sir George Cornewall Lewis wrote on "Irish Disturbances and Irish Church Questions" in 1836, he could say that Ireland was still clay in the potter's hand; that the elements of society, which had been firmly fixed in England and Scotland, were there still floating in chaos and awaiting the hand of power to fix and fashion them. For three-quarters of a century, putting aside the rebellion of 1798, there had been constant disturbances. The Whiteboys and the Hearts of Steel, the Oak-boys and the Rightboys, the Peep-o'-Day Boys, the Defenders and the Ribbonmen, the Thrashers and the Orangemen, had all murdered and pillaged within the memory of men still alive when Lewis wrote. A history of their contributions to lawlessness and disorder between the years 1761 and 1836 led that most judicial writer (who is always dry and moderate, if not niggardly, in his generalisations) to express himself in terms not more startling than accurate, and yet—to the shame and disgrace of intervening Premiers—as applicable in 1869 as in 1836:—

Cornewall Lewis on Irish Discontent.

"For the last seventy years Ireland has been the scene of constantly recurring disturbances; sometimes consisting only of the number of a few persons, or the burning of a few houses, and sometimes rising to general insurrection. Successive Governments have apparently exhausted every means in their power to suppress the evil, but without success. The statute book has been loaded with the severest laws; the country has been covered with military and police; capital punishment has been unsparingly inflicted; Australia has been crowded [!] with transported convicts; and all to no purpose. Committees and commissions have collected piles of evidence; the most various plans of policy have been recommended by different persons: some have attributed the turbulence of the inferior Irish to their inherent barbarism; some to their religion; some to their hatred of England; some to their want of education. Much new legislation has been tried and in vain; in a large part of Ireland there is still less security of person and property than in any other part of Europe, except, perhaps, the wildest districts of Calabria and Greece: and there are persons who altogether despair of establishing permanent tranquillity in Ireland, and who think that it is an exception to all the ordinary rules of government."

In truth, through the spectacles of religious animosity and racial distrust, Irish grievances seemed sufficiently small, Irish laws sufficiently just, their administration sufficiently impartial; and English statesmen, unfocussed visionaries, had pushed political fatalism so far as to conceive that there was "an innate and indelible tendency in the Irish to disturbance and outrage." It struck Lewis that the state of Ireland might be explained "without supposing any deviations from the general course of human nature." One hardly knows whether to wonder most at the lateness of the discovery or at the reluctance of politicians to make use of it; so difficult did it prove to drive off the field that famous theory of the Spanish commander, who said, after the battle of Kinsale, that "when the Devil upon the Mount did show Christ all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, he did not doubt but the Devil left out Ireland, and kept it for himself."

The English system in Ireland was compared by Mr. Gladstone to the upas tree of the Malays, which, according to popular report, destroys all animal and vegetable life within the circle of its poisonous influence. Of its two great branches, sectarian and agrarian, the first to be attacked and cut down was the Anglican Church. It had long been marked out for destruction by the satirist and the reformer. It had

MR. GLADSTONE'S FIRST CABINET, 1869.

(*From the Painting by Henry Barraud.*)

not altogether escaped the censure of its own clergymen or of those belonging to the parent church in England. Two bishops had abstained from the division on Mr. Gladstone's Bill to stop new appointments. Dr. Temple of Rugby had reasoned against the Irish Establishment. Whately, the previous Archbishop of Dublin, without admitting that the Anglican Church in Ireland could be regarded as a burden economically, had declared that its continuance was "a grievance and an insult." The Rev. Sydney Smith had effervesced over the subject:—"There is no abuse like it in all Europe, in all Asia, in all the discovered parts of Africa, and in all we have heard of Timbuctoo." If we add an *obiter dictum* of the Metropolitan Bishop of Montreal and a politic utterance of Bishop Wilberforce, the list of Mr. Gladstone's clerical supporters, dead or living, will be nearly complete. Yet from the dexterous way in which he conjured with these few names at Ormskirk* it might have been imagined that the promoters of Irish Disestablishment from within the Anglican hierarchy formed a very considerable minority.

**The Irish Church.**

But, clerical feeling apart, how did the decision which Mr. Gladstone had taken harmonise with his own past? The "Chapter of Autobiography" was published in December, 1868. It had been written in the previous September, and was withheld by the advice of friends, among them Bishop Wilberforce, until after the General Election. Mr. Gladstone's object in writing it was to rescue his proposal of Irish Disestablishment "from the odium of baseness, and the lighter reproach of precipitancy." The fourth edition of "The State in its Relations to the Church" had appeared in 1841. In that book he recommended the resolute maintenance of the Church as an Establishment. But it was to be so maintained, not for the sake of the members, but for the sake of its doctrine. The author found, as we have seen, that he was "the last man in a sinking ship." Hence his resignation on the Maynooth Question in 1844. Upon this resignation, which is to be regarded as an act of political penance, his whole apology rests:—"I respectfully submit that by this act my freedom was established, and that it has never since, during a period of nearly five-and-twenty years, been compromised." Strange to say, the "Chapter of Autobiography" does not put his case at its best. Thus, he writes that he *privately* asserted his freedom at the formation of the Russell Ministry in 1846; he refused to give a pledge to his Oxford Committee in 1847—but of course, they did not publish the fact; he said, speaking on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in 1851, "we cannot change the profound and resistless tendencies of the age towards religious liberty." Then, according to the Autobiography, there followed a long blank, during which Mr. Gladstone made no public utterances, but voted steadily *against* motions for committees of inquiry into the Irish Church—on the ground that they were partial and unsatisfactory. Indeed, until the speech of 1865 nothing is recorded except a private communication to Sir Roundell Palmer in 1863.

With these few merely external notes Mr. Gladstone leaves the account of the progress of his own mind and passes to the march of events and the development of public sentiment. He vindicates himself completely from the absurd charge of baseness, but only partially from the more

* October 12th, 1868.

plausible charge of precipitancy. Why during all those twenty-eight years of freedom, would be the reader's natural inquiry, has not the author of "The State in its Relations to the Church," and the disestablisher of the Irish Church, published some substantial recantation, some meditated expression, of his changed opinions? The answer is simply this, that he had done so, and that the omission in his "Chapter of Autobiography" leaves his case unnecessarily weak. In December, 1851, Mr. Gladstone wrote from Fasque, in the capacity of a Scottish Episcopalian, a letter which may be regarded as his first public palinode.* Take one short passage:—

"The time has been when, as I think, it was the duty of a good citizen to look with utter aversion on whatever seemed to impair strictness of religious character and profession in the State. With that religious character, consistently and religiously maintained, it is hard, we must admit, to reconcile full liberty of conscience; but in maintaining it for the times of which I speak, the greater good was preserved and the lesser sacrificed. It is not so now. It is now so utter an impossibility to uphold a consistent religious profession in the State, that we must be satisfied with an inconsistent one, and thankful if it do not shock the common reason and sense of justice planted in mankind, by affecting a bastard and deceptive consistency."

And again: "However wary and patient we may be as to our question of moving forwards, [it is] above all [our first duty to] be careful not to move backwards, nor for one moment acquiesce in any kind of tampering with the religious liberty of conscience in the persons either of ourselves or others." And the practical conclusion is, "What, then, we (I mean the members of all independent religious bodies) have to desire is to be let alone, and especially not to be put on the bed of Procrustes—a mode of accommodation by no means out of favour in some quarters." Nor did this letter pass unnoticed or unchallenged. Dr. Charles Wordsworth at once replied with a vigorous protest, declared that he detected the germ of Liberation, and took credit to himself for having seen Mr. Gladstone's backsliding as early as the election of 1847.

If we pass from the personal to the public grounds for Mr. Gladstone's determination to put an end to the Church Establishment of Ireland, all difficulty at once disappears. The rapid growth of Feniamism and the occurrence of sensational outrages under Fenian auspices had directed public attention to Ireland, and as soon as the search-light was turned full upon the Establishment, the Establishment was doomed, or at any rate condemned by a body of public opinion sufficiently strong for the purposes of a great statesman. A Royal Commission, as we have seen, had been appointed; but its report, issued after Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions had been carried, fell extremely flat. With the help of the statistics afforded by the Commission, Mr. Gladstone computed that whereas the average Anglican clergyman in England had £200 a year for looking after 600 souls, an Anglican clergyman in Ireland had £300 for looking after 350 souls. The Commissioners proposed that the number of the bishops should be reduced:—

**Report of the Royal Commission.**

"There are, gentlemen, a matter of twelve bishops in the Irish Church, and the first important recommendation of the Commission is that we should bury four of them. Not to

* "A Letter to the Right Rev. William Skinner, D.D., Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus, on the Functions of Laymen in the Church." Third Edition. London: John Murray, 1852.

bury the actual men, which would be inhuman, but to bury what they call the 'corporations.' For you must know that every bishop of a see and every incumbent of a parish is in law a 'corporation sole,' and four of these 'corporations sole' they purpose to bury."*

The Commissioners also proposed to reduce some of the ecclesiastical incomes. But the savings so effected were to be applied to place the income of all Irish bishops at £3,000 a year, and to pay an extra £500 a year to those who happened—by rotation—to be sitting in the House of Lords. It was certainly rather curious, as Mr. Gladstone remarked, that these otherwise very Conservative Commissioners should have included payment of Members—one of the five points of the Charter—in their recommendations. The Commissioners also advised the suppression of any benefice where there might be found to be not more than forty members of the Established Church in the parish. Mr. Gladstone gave one instance to show the way in which the proposed "reforms" would work. He took the concrete case of fourteen benefices in Ireland with a total Anglican membership of 1,332 souls. In each of these benefices, besides the incumbent (who was frequently out) there was a curate. The incomes of the fourteen incumbents added together amounted to £8,192 a year. The fourteen curates received, over and above this, 1,400 guineas a year. If the model Establishment proposed by the Commissioners had been set up, nine churches and benefices would have been substituted for fourteen. "There will be nine curates at 100 guineas a year each, to take care of the 1,172 people—that is about 130 apiece, and I think they may manage that. And there will be nine incumbents having nothing to do, because the curates will do it, and they will receive for doing nothing £6,000, or say £5,000 or even £4,000, in the Church out of which all the abuses will have been removed."

The Commissioners made one other notable recommendation:—

"It is recommended that a number of Chapters shall be suppressed, and it is recommended that wherever it is possible the parish clerk shall be consolidated with the grave-digger. I am of opinion, gentlemen, that we have got beyond that point. It is a great deal too late to save the Established Church in Ireland by consolidating parish clerks and grave-diggers."

**Reform not Possible.**

From facts like these Mr. Gladstone had come to the conclusion that it was useless to attempt to preserve the Irish Establishment by getting rid of its abuses: "if you take away its abuses there will be nothing left." There remained another argument—that the Irish Establishment should be maintained for the benefit of Protestantism. Mr. Gladstone examined this allegation in the light of statistics. In 1672 Sir William Petty computed that there were in Ireland forty-five Protestants to every 120 Catholics. Ever since then "the whole ecclesiastical property of the country" had been in the hands of a small minority under the name of supporting Protestantism. There were also "penal laws." The "moral screw" was applied. In 1730 there were forty-eight Protestants to 120 Roman Catholics. In 1784, after 112 years of pressure and persecution, the position had considerably amended. There were then sixty Protestants to 120 Roman Catholics. Then we began to relax the penal laws:

**The Argument from Protestantism.**

"In 1801—I now quote the authority of Mr. Musgrave, the historian of the Irish

* Mr. Gladstone's speech at Newton, October 17th, 1868. This is a *locus classicus* for Mr. Gladstone's views on the Irish Church Question.

Rebellion, who is certainly a decided partisan of ascendancy—in 1801, the penal laws having now been materially relaxed, and the Roman Catholics even admitted to the elective franchise, I find that the Protestants were forty to 120 Roman Catholics, having been sixty some twenty years before. We then went on and had further relaxation. We even admitted the Roman Catholics—and I am thankful we did—to Parliament, and in 1834 we had another religious census, and the proportion was now one Protestant to four Roman Catholics, or thirty Protestants to 120 Roman Catholics. Now, gentlemen, in 1861 it is true there is a slight improvement; it is a fractional improvement. I must get another denominator in order to exhibit it; I cannot exhibit it well upon the denominator of 120 that I have got. In 1834 the Protestants were a trifle under one to four; in 1861 they are a trifle over one to four—that is all the difference. But recollect what had happened in the meantime—that awful famine of 1847, and the enormous wholesale exportation of the poorer population—that is, the Roman Catholic population of Ireland—across the Atlantic. Therefore, gentlemen, I say that, although casually the return of 1861 is a trifle better than that of 1834, in reality, if you allow ever so moderately for the operation of these powerful causes, it is a worse return than that of 1834."*

Enough has now been given to show the nature of the evidence by which Mr. Gladstone justified and fortified himself for his attack upon the Irish Church. It only remains to consider the means by which the end was attained, and the proposals by which the Act of Disestablishment, "of civil justice," as Mr. Gladstone himself phrased it, was finally passed.

The Bill "to put an end to the Established Church in Ireland, to make provision in respect to the temporalities thereof, and of the Royal College of Maynooth," was introduced on March 1st, 1869, in a speech of three hours, in the course of which, on the willing admission of Disraeli, "not a phrase was wasted." Without denying that he was proposing "a great constitutional change," Mr. Gladstone insisted that the change was itself conservative in spirit:—

**The Bill Introduced, 1869.**

"It is said that the measure we are about to introduce will be adverse to religion. I believe it to be favourable, to be essential, to the maintenance of those principles of right on which every religion must rest. We shall point to the condition of Ireland, and shall argue from the facts of that condition that the interests of Protestantism have not been promoted, but, on the contrary, have been injured by our perseverance in a system which reason does not justify. We shall be told, perhaps, that we are invading the rights of property. No possible confidence can be greater than that with which we shall meet that argument. On former occasions, indeed, things have been done by Parliament, under the extreme pressure of the case, which it may be difficult to reconcile with the extreme assertion of the rights of property. There are clauses, and important clauses, of the Church Temporalities Act of 1833 which greatly restrain the abstract theory of property, and which I, for one, am totally unable to reconcile with its general rules. But, so far as I know, there is no imputation that can fairly be made against the measure we propose with respect to the rights of property by any other persons than those who hold what appears to me the untenable—I may even say the extravagant—doctrine that, although Parliament has a perfect right to direct the course of the descent of property in the case of natural descent, lineage by blood, yet it has no right, when once the artificial existence of what we call a corporation has been created, to control the existence of that corporation, or to extinguish it even under the gravest public exigency. Well, we shall be told also of the Act of Union; and I cannot, nor shall I attempt to, dissemble that on a point which has been described as essential we propose to alter that Act. The Act of Union has been altered on other occasions, though never for so grave a cause as this; but we shall confidently

* Speech at Newton, October 17th, 1868.

contend that while we are altering this particular provision of the Act of Union, we are confirming its general purport and substance, and labouring to the best of our humble ability to give it those roots which unfortunately it has never yet adequately struck in the heart and affections of the people.

"And, lastly, Sir, this claim I, for one, confidently, boldly make on behalf of the measure that we are introducing—I say we are giving effect to the spirit of a former policy. The great Minister who proposed the Act of Union neither said nor believed that it would be possible under a legislative Union to maintain the system of religious inequality which he found subsisting in Ireland. On the contrary, he has left upon record his strong conviction that the countenance and support afforded from national sources to the Established Church must be extended to other religions of the country. I admit that we pursue religious equality by means different from those proposed by Mr. Pitt—but by means, as I believe, better suited to the purpose we had in view, and certainly more consonant to the spirit, to the opportunities, and to the possibilities of the times in which we live."

The scheme was elaborately complete, and its exposition abounded with Gladstonian touches. Thus, with reference to the lapse of the four intermittent spiritual peerages:—

"I own that it is not without some regret and pain that I propose a provision which should seem in the slightest degree to convey a slight or disparagement in point of dignity to individuals who, as such, I believe to be fully and amply worthy of the honours they enjoy in the House of Lords."

Again, in allotting compensation, a distinction was drawn between "transitory" and permanent curates, upon a principle appropriately borrowed from the Superannuation Acts of the Civil Service. "Private endowments" were to remain the property of the Church. Mr. Gladstone defined them as "money contributed from private sources since the year 1660." This limit had been recommended to the Government by the consideration that the Restoration was really the period at which the Reformed or Protestant Church of Ireland assumed its proper shape and character. This led the Premier to an interesting historical digression on the struggle between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy in Ireland, in the course of which he made a charming reference to one of the few private endowments of the English Church in Ireland—a case "of extraordinary interest":—

**Dean Swift.**

"Take the case of the parish of Laracor, the parish of which Swift was vicar before he was transferred to the Deanery of St. Patrick's. When he went into it, Laracor had a glebe-house and one acre. He left it with a glebe-house and twenty acres. He improved and decorated it in many ways. It is sad and melancholy to learn, if only we look upon this place as one of the memorials of so extraordinary a man, that many of the embellishments, or what our Scotch friends would call 'amenities,' of the glebe which grew up under his fostering hand have since been effaced. He endowed the vicarage with certain tithes which he had purchased for the purpose; and I doubt whether it is generally very well known that a curious question arises on this bequest, because a portion of his property — by-the-bye, consisting, I believe, of those very tithes—was left by him for what he calls—I never knew the term to be used elsewhere—'the Episcopal religion established in Ireland.' But that extraordinary man, even at the time when he wrote that the Irish Catholics were so down-trodden and insignificant that no possible change could ever bring them into a position of importance, appears to have foreseen the day when the ecclesiastical arrangements of Ireland would be called to account; because, not satisfied with leaving the property to maintain the Episcopal religion, he proceeds to provide for the day when that Episcopal religion might be disestablished and be no longer the national religion of

the country. Apparently, by some secret intimation, he foresaw the shortness of its existence as an Establishment, for he left the property subject to a condition that in such case it should be administered for the benefit of the poor."

One clause must not be forgotten, that by which, to use plain language, the Irish landlords were bribed to acquiesce in the disestablishment of their own Church.* But Mr. Gladstone was not a plain man; and in this case, by elaborating and complicating the transaction, he succeeded in mystifying his followers completely, and even, it would seem, in persuading himself that this part of the scheme was perfectly legitimate. Some of his hearers might, he admitted, be inclined to place it "in the category of financial puzzles." Still he thought it would have an "innocent and beneficial bearing upon the Irish land question." The self-deception, however, was not by any means complete, for he pointed out that the arrangement "would not be bad for the Irish landlords," and added, "I perceive by the buzz around me that this portion of the subject at any rate is not without some interest to a great many hon. members." It is hardly an elevating scene to look back to—this awakening of absentee landlords who had been dozing over annuities to curates—this brisk and cheerful hum of wakeful worldly avarice which took the place of a somnolent moaning over a spiritual disaster—squires brightening up at the discovery of the solid advantages which would accrue from the downfall of their religion, from the perpetration of what Lord Carrick had prematurely pilloried as "the greatest national sin ever committed."

**A Sop for Landlords.**

The financial puzzle and the other operations connected with winding up the old corporations need not concern us. Mr. Gladstone calculated that when all vested interests and necessary expenses had been disposed of, a sum of between seven and eight millions would be left. With regard to its disposal he laid down three principles:—

**The Surplus.**

1. It should be applied to Irish purposes.†
2. The purposes should be non-religious.‡
3. They should be final. No door should be left-open to fresh controversy.

The Government had therefore decided to apply the whole surplus to the relief of unavoidable calamities not provided for by the Poor Law. No summary of the Act, or even of the speech in which Mr. Gladstone interpreted it to the House, could do justice to the delicacy of its design, as no summary of the history of its workings could do justice to the completeness with which it accomplished the purposes of its author. In a peroration of much power and beauty he said that no pains had been spared in framing the measure. It had been without doubt a task which put even his vast skill and ingenuity to a very serious strain:—

"It is a subject of legislation so exceedingly complex and varied that I have no doubt

* But for this clause the historian would be at a loss to explain why the hideous threats with which the Orange laity greeted the Bill were so soon dropped.

† This principle was, however, violated by the application of £1,000,000 of Irish Church money to the commutation of the Maynooth grant and the Regium Donum, which were annual charges on the Consolidated Fund.

‡ In reply to the charge of secularisation, Mr. Gladstone pointed out that one-fourth part of the property of the Church was by the old Canon Law consecrated to the use of the poor.

there must be errors, there must be omissions, and there may be many possible improvements; and we shall welcome from every side, quite irrespective of differences of opinion on the outlines of the measure, suggestions which, when those outlines are decided upon, may tend to secure a more beneficial application of these funds to the welfare of the people of Ireland. I trust, Sir, that although its operation be stringent, and although we have not thought it either politic or allowable to attempt to diminish its stringency by making it incomplete, the spirit towards the Church of Ireland as a religious communion in which this measure has been considered and prepared by my colleagues and myself has not been a spirit of unkindness."

The Peroration.

Here, too, Mr. Gladstone, speaking for himself—and of course the measure was in the largest sense his own—was minimising rather than exaggerating the truth. It could fairly be said that no living interests were injured by the Bill; and in the event what Mr. Gladstone desired and calculated happened—the Church emerged a rich corporation. The generosity shown to the landlords who were the natural supporters and patrons of the Irish Established Church was from this point of view highly politic; for the very process of disestablishment placed the most powerful class in Ireland under an obligation to the new Church. The Premier did not try to under-estimate the magnitude of the change which he was bringing about in Irish society:—

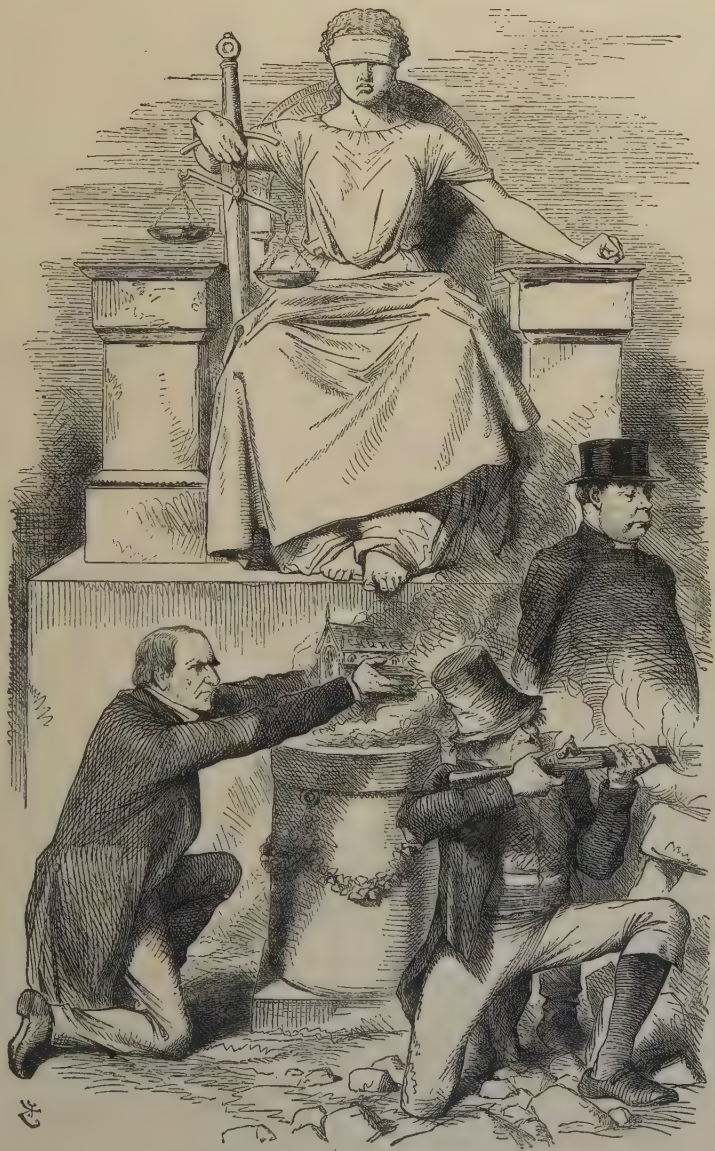
"We are undoubtedly asking an educated, highly respected, and generally pious and zealous body of clergymen to undergo a great transition; we are asking a powerful and intelligent minority of the laity in Ireland, in connection with the Established Church, to abate a great part of the exceptional privileges they have enjoyed; but I do not feel that in making this demand upon them we are seeking to inflict an injury. I do not believe they are exclusively or even mainly responsible for the errors of English policy towards Ireland; I am quite certain that in many vital respects they have suffered by it; I believe that the free air they will breathe under a system of equality and justice, giving scope for the development of their great energies, with all the powers of property and intelligence they will bring to bear, will make that Ireland which they love a country for them not less enviable and not less beloved in the future than it has been in the past."

In a few eloquent sentences Mr. Gladstone made a last confident appeal not unworthy of his measure and of the speech in which it had been expounded:—

"As respects the Church, I admit it is a case almost without exception. I do not know in what country so great a change, so great a transition, has been proposed for the ministers of a religious communion who have enjoyed during so many ages the preferred position of an Established Church. I can well understand that to many in the Irish Establishment such a change appears to be nothing less than ruin and destruction. From the height on which they now stand the future is an abyss, and their fears recall the words used in *King Lear*, when Edgar endeavours to persuade Gloucester that he has fallen over the cliffs of Dover, and says:—

'Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:
Thy life's a miracle.'

And yet but a little after the old man rallies from his delusion, and finds that he has not fallen at all. So I trust that when, instead of the fictitious and adventitious aid on which we have too long taught the Irish Establishment to lean, it shall come to place its trust in its own resources, in its own great mission, in all that it can draw from the energy of its ministers and its members, and the high hopes and promises of the Gospel that it teaches, it will find that it has entered upon a new era of existence, an era bright with hope and promise. At any rate I think the day has certainly come when an end has finally to be



# JUSTICE TO IRELAND.

THE BRITISH MINISTER. "THIS IS A SACRIFICE TO JUSTICE, NOT TO PAPISTS OR ASSASSINS. AND IF THEY _____"

*(By permission of Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co.)*

put to the union between the Establishment and the State, which was commenced under circumstances little auspicious, and which has endured to be a source of unhappiness to Ireland, and of discredit and scandal to England.

"Sir, there is more to say. This measure is in every sense a great measure—great in its principles, great in the multitude of its dry, technical, but interesting detail, and great as a testing measure. For it will show to one and all of us of what metal we are made. Upon us all it brings a great responsibility—first and foremost undoubtedly upon those who occupy this bench. We are especially chargeable—nay, deeply guilty, if we have either dishonestly, as some think, or even prematurely or unwisely, challenged so gigantic an issue. I know well the punishments that follow rashness in public affairs, and that ought to fall upon those men, those Phaetons of politics, who with hands unequal to the task attempt to guide the chariot of the sun. But our responsibility, though heavy, is not exclusive. It presses on every man who has to take part in the discussion and decision upon this Bill. Every man approaches the discussion under the most solemn obligations to raise the level of his vision, and expand its scope in proportion to the greatness of the object. The working of our Constitutional government itself is upon its trial; for I do not believe there ever was a time when the wheels of legislative machinery were set in motion, under the conditions of peace, and order, and Constitutional regularity, to deal with a question graver or more profound. And more especially, Sir, is the credit and fame of this great assembly involved. This assembly, which has inherited through many ages the accumulated honours of brilliant triumphs, of peaceful but courageous legislation, is now called upon to address itself to a task which would indeed have demanded all the best energies of the very best among your fathers and your ancestors. I believe it will prove to be worthy of the task. Should it fail, even the fame of the House of Commons will suffer no disparagement; should it succeed, even that fame, I venture to say, will receive no small nor insensible addition."

The Second Reading was carried by a majority of 118, and the Bill passed the Commons without any substantial alteration. The House of Lords did not dare to reject the "Church Confiscation Bill," as Malmesbury called it. But some important amendments were introduced. The Commons refused to accept them, and sent the Bill back. The Lords determined to insist upon one amendment (postponing the appropriation of the surplus) which had been rejected in the Commons by 222. The deadlock had become serious, and Lord Granville adjourned the House to consult with his colleagues. The rest is told in Lord Malmesbury's Diary (July 22nd, 1869):—

**The Bill Carried.**

"The House of Lords has agreed to a compromise. Lord Cairns settled it with Lord Granville. . . . Gladstone wanted to throw up the Bill after the debate of last Tuesday, when the words of the preamble were reinserted, but he was outvoted in his Cabinet; and it is said that Lord Granville told him that if he gave up the Bill he must find somebody else to lead the Lords. He must have intended to provoke a collision between the two Houses, and the feeling he showed on this occasion proves, and not for the first time, what his sentiments are against that institution."

The time which was occupied in the passing of the measure was spent in a manner fully in keeping with the traditions of the Irish Church Establishment. "The Bill provided that no new interests should be created in the interval between its passing and the actual disestablishment, which was to take place on January 1st, 1871. But while the measure was still under discussion, some of the rulers of the Church thought it convenient to create as many new interests as possible. New curates entitled to compensation were appointed with astounding rapidity, and the incomes of some of the clergy were increased with a liberal hand."* To treat corruption as venial was distasteful to Mr. Gladstone; but it was

* Mr. Justin M'Carthy's "History of Our Own Times," vol. iv., pp. 110, 111.

necessary to be politic, and to wink at this last characteristic wag of the ecclesiastical tail.

Thus was passed the famous Disestablishment scheme, perhaps the most perfect and successful of all Mr. Gladstone's great political measures. Just as the speech in which it was introduced succeeded by its artistic arrangement in making plain a complex and intricate scheme, so the Act, concise in its very precision, was elaborately thought out and skilfully drawn to meet every possible contingency; and it was mainly the resolute will and untiring energy of its originator and composer which carried it practically unaltered through both Houses—a legislative achievement which the "Annual Register," in one of its rare bursts of eloquence, magnifies into "the most remarkable of modern times." Enthusiasts thought that it would produce eternal amity in the relations of Celt and Saxon; and it is recorded that a distinguished Irishman, when he heard the Royal assent announced, ejaculated: "Thank God, the bridge is at last broken down that has so long separated the English and Irish peoples"!

**The Act a Monument of Legislative Genius.**

During the progress of the Bill the Government was more than once embarrassed by the indiscretions of Mr. Bright. On June 14th the new President of the Board of Trade, in reply to a correspondent, used some dreadfully unofficial language about the House of Lords. If they should attempt to obstruct or delay the Irish Church Bill "they might meet with accidents not pleasant for them to think of." Mr. Gladstone was asked in the House of Commons whether the letter signed John Bright was written by the President of the Board of Trade, and, if such were the case, whether the Government concurred with the opinions expressed in the letter. Mr. Gladstone's answer is a good specimen of the legitimate Parliamentary art of saying nothing at great length. He admits the authenticity of Mr. Bright's letter, but adds: "I must say that the Government have not thought it their duty, and will not think it their duty, to consider in detail the particulars of those opinions. . . . There may be many things with which in the abstract, as propositions, the Government would agree, and yet which as a Government they might not think themselves justified or warranted in stating with regard to the action of a branch of the Legislature."*

**Mr. Bright's Fling at the House of Lords.**

In July a sharp debate arose over Sir John (afterwards Lord) Coleridge's Bill for the abolition of tests in connection with University fellowships. Mr. Gladstone was sharply attacked for his vacillations upon this subject. Circumstances, he replied, had modified his policy from time to time, though his opinion about religious education was "exactly the same" as before.† In the same month occurred an event of some importance, as indicating one aspect of the Prime Minister's foreign policy. Russia agreed to regard Afghanistan as a neutral zone. Mr. Gladstone's friendliness to Russia was perhaps not altogether disconnected from his sympathy with the Greek Church.

**University Reform, 1869.**

* Hansard, June 17th, 1869.

† The Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords, and in the following year met with the same fate. But in 1871 Mr. Gladstone made it a Government measure and passed it through the Upper House, in spite of Lord Salisbury's resistance.

Mr. Gladstone's energy during this his first session as Prime Minister was almost superhuman. It was computed by some newspaper statistician that he was 178 times on his legs in the House of Commons, that his speeches occupied about eighty columns of the *Times*, and would, if placed on end in single column, have reached to the top of the Monument.

An account of the first session of his first Premiership would be very incomplete without some mention of his Cabinet Councils. It happens that Sir Frederick Pollock's volumes of Personal Remembrances* contain an amusing description, entered in his diary after breakfasting with a communicative member of the Cabinet: "The Lord President nominally presided, and would take the divisions, if any. Mr. Gladstone sits in the centre of the table. Foreign affairs always come first. There is no record of what takes place, but the Premier always writes to the Queen an account of each Council. No one is admitted to the room, but the junior Cabinet Minister goes to the door if anything arrives—Goschen now does this. The likeness of Lord Granville in *Vanity Fair* arrived in an official-looking envelope directed to him, and was delivered to him in Cabinet. It was handed round, and for some moments suspended a discussion on the Irish Church." In another part of his Diary Sir Frederick asserts that Lowe divided the Cabinet upon the Latinity of some words used by a half-witted person in an exculpatory statement at the Old Bailey.

**A Peep into Mr. Gladstone's Cabinets.**

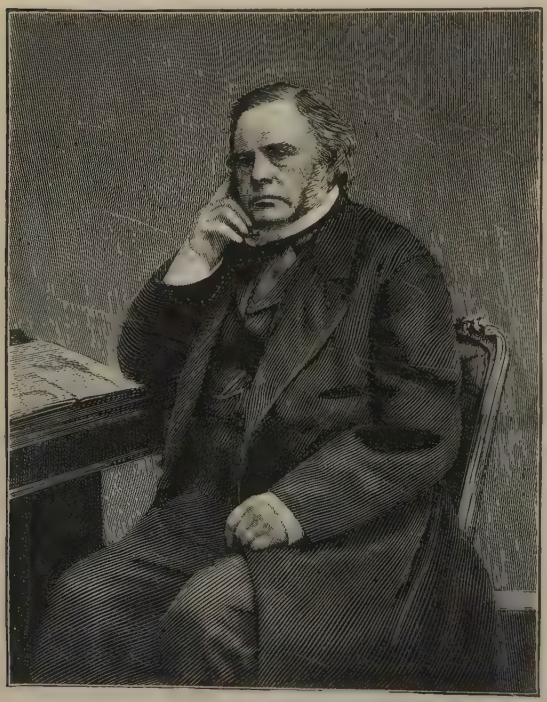


*Photo: Mault and Fox, Piccadilly, W.*
JOHN BRIGHT IN THE 'SIXTIES.

Early in the October of 1869 Mr. Gladstone met Jowett at Camperdown House, Dundee, where both were guests of Lord Camperdown. Jowett "had looked forward with great eagerness to this visit, and his host reports that he had never seen him so absorbed in anyone. They talked incessantly for hours in the library and about the grounds. Jowett was very much provoked one morning when Gladstone had insisted on rising early and going to hear an Episcopal preacher at Perth. Mr. Gladstone

**A Meeting with Jowett, 1869.**

* Vol. ii., p. 201.

at this time was considering the outline of his first Land Bill of 1870, and Ireland was one chief topic of their conversations. Mr. Gladstone tried to impress on Jowett's mind that no one hitherto had understood the Irish, or had rightly sympathised with them. Jowett . . . [spoke] of the great interest he had felt in this meeting. 'It was the first time,' he said, 'that anyone of such great simplicity had been in so exalted a position.' It would be curious and interesting to mark the sequel, but it seemed to him to be full of peril because the great statesman was 'so powerful and unsound.' He observed that Mr. Gladstone failed to recognise the truth that the moral excuses for political crime ought not to make a statesman less firm in repressing it."* There are, no doubt, many who will reflect with satisfaction that the superior educational advantages which only Balliol College, Oxford, could offer were thus temporarily thrown open to Mr. Gladstone, and who will regret that a statesman so "powerful and unsound" had reached an age at which he could hardly hope to make full use of his opportunity.

EARL GRANVILLE.
("*Vanity Fair*" *Cartoon.*)

**Ireland still to the Fore, 1870.**

Having cut down the first branch of the Upas tree in the first year of his Administration, Mr. Gladstone was determined that the second year should see the fall of the second branch. Accordingly, at the very beginning of the session of 1870, he announced that the duty of the Government in regard to Ireland was still "paramount and primary," and expressed his belief that the amendment of Irish land tenure would prove the death-blow to Fenianism.

**The Irish Land System.**

The Irish land laws, like the English, were based on feudalism. But there was this important difference. In England from of old the landlord had led his tenants to battle, and a friendly or rather patriarchal relationship was carried down into peaceful times. The typical English landlord regarded himself as responsible to some extent for the prosperity of his tenant, just as the tenant was responsible to him for his rent, his vote, and the expression of his opinions. In Ireland, on the other hand, even in feudal times, landlords and tenants commonly fought on different sides, and in the periods which followed, political, religious, and racial antipathies continued unabated. But the difference between the land question in Ireland and in England

* Life of Benjamin Jowett, vol. i., p. 406

cannot be at all understood until one simple proposition is grasped. Whereas in England the tenant thinks that the land belongs to the landlord, the Irish tenant regards it as properly his own. To his mind the cultivator, not the rent-receiver, is proprietor.* The subject race remembered that their land had been taken by force, and although the law — excepting in Ulster — imposed on the landlord even lighter duties and gave him even more extravagant rights than in England,† the Irish peasant never succumbed to the error of confusing law with justice. Nor was there the religious sanction which the clergy of an Established Church — where that Church happens also to be the Church of the majority—can give to the interests of its patrons. In Ireland, a religion which was under the ban of the law was hardly likely to give spiritual support to the law's authority. Nor did the emancipation of the Roman Catholics bring the necessary reforms. Under a system of restricted suffrage and open voting the landlord interest kept a majority of Irish representatives. True it is that Sir Robert Peel was prepared to do something. He recognised frankly enough that the great work of his life did not affect Ireland, or, if it affected it at all, affected it unfavourably. "If there is any part of the United Kingdom likely to suffer from the withdrawal of Protection, it is Ireland; for Ireland has not, as England has, the means of finding employment for her agricultural population in her manufacturing districts." As a set-off he made the whole cost of the Irish police a charge on the Imperial Exchequer; and the numbers of the Irish police promptly advanced by leaps and bounds. It was the one form of financial relief that human ingenuity could have devised to benefit Irish landlords at the same time that it injured Irish tenants. It is, perhaps, to Peel's credit that, though he did what he ought not to have done, he found out what ought to have been done. The Devon Commission which reported in 1845 was appointed by him, and, acting on its recommendations, his Government actually made a faint and futile attempt to give a measure of security to the tenant. But the scheme was dropped in consequence of the bitter opposition of the Irish landlords.‡

Mr. Lecky in his Home Rule days made out a strong case for the view that all the worst ills of Ireland sprang from the Union; and Mr. Gladstone went far to confirm that view by the retrospect with which he introduced his remedial legislation. "For ninety-eight years—I may say for a century — we have been legislating in favour of Ireland. During that time we have destroyed the odious fabric of the penal laws. We have conferred one by one every political privilege upon our Roman Catholic fellow citizens . . . . and, lastly, we have, at no small sacrifice of feelings to large portions of the community, extended, I rejoice to say, the

Mr. Gladstone on Irish Grievances.

* A curious illustration came quite recently to the knowledge of the present writer. A tenant applied to a Land Court claiming that his rent should be reduced under various heads. Adding the items together the Judge discovered that if all the claims were allowed, a small sum would be owing annually from the landlord to his tenant; but when he explained this as a *reductio ad absurdum*, the claimant was not in the least embarrassed.

† The feudal law of distress had been strengthened in Ireland.

‡ See Mr. Shaw Lefevre's "Peel and O'Connell," pp. 233, 268. Mr. Gladstone agreed with the views there expressed.

principle of equality to the religious conditions and circumstances of Ireland. Yet, notwithstanding all these things," said Mr. Gladstone solemnly, "I doubt whether at this moment, so far as the law is concerned, the condition of the Irish peasant is materially better, or even better at all, than it was before the mitigation of the penal laws." * It might be urged that Church tithes had been compounded and Church cess abolished. Workhouses had been introduced. Something had been done to reduce pauperism and something to extend education. "But when you educate a people and give them an emancipated mind and a free Press, but do not at the same time remove other causes of complaint and grievance, I ask you whether, so far from giving a motive for contentment, you do not take the very course that is sure to end in the augmentation of every difficulty with which you have to contend." At any rate, against this beneficial legislation should be set the Encumbered Estates Act, which in "a vast number of cases" operated as a confiscation of the improvements executed by the tenant. But besides that Act there were the new statutes of evictions—the Act of 1816, which simplified the law for the benefit of the landlord, and made ejectment easy.† **Irish Grievances.**

Mr. Gladstone, it must be added, had himself supplemented the list of Irish grievances. The legislation of 1853, which "let loose the springs of industry" in England, had no similar effect in Ireland, for there were no longer any such springs to let loose. It is obvious, therefore, that the relief which Mr. Gladstone gave to the Irish consumer was an insufficent pretext for the extension of the income-tax to Ireland and the increase of the duty on whisky by 8d. per gallon. The truth is that Ireland, though she was undoubtedly the better for Free Trade, had not benefited to the same extent as the rest of the United Kingdom; and Mr. Gladstone's passion for arithmetical equalisation and financial simplification had been extremely unfortunate. In the words of Sir Joseph McKenna, he was giving a shilling of relief with one hand while he extracted a pound of taxes with the other. This may be, and no doubt is, an exaggerated statement, but when all has been said, the stubborn fact remains that between 1851 and 1861 direct taxation increased 10s. 2d. per head in Ireland as compared with 3s. 3d. per head in Great Britain. The Irish agriculturist was heavily handicapped in another way. His railway rates were so high, and his railways so few and far between, that the corn lands of the Elbe and the Danube were more accessible to the English merchant than the rich plains of Mayo and Leitrim.

Far worse, however, in its social effects than the financial injustice inflicted in the 'fifties had been the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849, under which a new set of landlords, with the same powers but without the scruples of the old, acquired a vast number of Irish estates. Evictions steadily increased. Most of the tenants in the south and west owed more than they could ever hope to pay. No amount of skill or economy could improve their position under the land laws and the landlord system. The evils were increased by a sham competition for farms. Bad **Effect of the Encumbered Estates Act.**

* Speech in the House of Commons introducing the Irish Land Bill, February 15th, 1870.

† The preamble to this Act recited that such were the expenses and delays of ejectment that it had been absolutely useless as a remedy.

tenants who never intended to pay rent bid high, took the farms, and lived on them till they were evicted. Arthur Young had recommended the landlords in their own interests to abandon the system of yearly lettings, and in their own interests to give security of tenure by granting leases of not less than twenty-one years. But the landlords of the Celtic provinces refused to abandon their traditional policy, and the condition of things went gradually from bad to worse. In Ulster a different system, and with it comparative prosperity, prevailed. There, by the custom known as *tenant right*, "not only the actual estate and right of the tenant, but also the goodwill of the expectation which the tenant had that he would be permitted to remain in possession on reasonable terms," were generally respected. A tenant who wished to leave his farm before the expiration of his lease was allowed by Ulster custom to sell his tenant right.

The Ulster Tenant Right.

But the Ulster tenant right was not law. It depended upon honourable feeling and public opinion; and it was not universal or universally satisfactory even in Ulster. To many who were unsympathetic, unintelligent, or uninformed, the idea seemed simply monstrous. Lord Palmerston had said that "tenant right was landlord wrong," and it took Mr. Gladstone a long time before he would consent to any interference with the rights of property. Unfortunately for Ireland, his attention had never been turned to the study of the Irish land question. Even in the year 1866 he was still indisposed to act. In that year Sir Colman O'Loughlin and Sir William Gregory introduced a very moderate Irish Land Bill to discourage annual tenancies and to give compensation for ejectment. They persuaded Mr. Gladstone to look at the Bill; and he ran his eye over the headings of the clauses. "Why," he ejaculated, "you want to interfere with the management of a man's own property," and added with great emphasis, "I will have nothing to do with it!" It is said that when in 1869 it was decided to legislate, and rough drafts were produced by various members of the Ministry, the draft Bill proposed by Mr. Gladstone, but not ultimately adopted, was by far the most conservative.

On February 15th the Irish Land Bill was introduced. The House was full, the galleries were crowded. A keen observer noticed that, although a dozen lay Peers had to stand, not a single Bishop was present:—

Introduction of the First Irish Land Bill, 1870.

"Last year, when Gladstone introduced his Irish Church Bill, a flock of prelates came down—'corbies' a profane member irreverently called them. 'I say,' he said to an official, 'look how the corbies are on the wing!' This Land Bill is infinitely more important than the Irish Church measure. But then it does not touch the clergy—only the people."

Mr. Gladstone's speech lasted for three hours and a quarter. His voice never failed; not for a moment did he falter or hesitate except when a burst of cheering compelled him to pause. "Post-time came," says the writer from whom we have just quoted, "but nobody stirred; dinner-time arrived, but the dining room remained empty. When the orator had exhausted his facts and arguments, and was evidently drawing to a close, there was a slight movement, and a dozen or two of members glided out of the House; but the mass remained. When, however, Mr.

Gladstone, after delivering his eloquent and impressive oration, sank into his seat, the chain which had held the members snapped, a volley of cheers burst forth, and the compact body broke up and poured out of the House like a torrent. When Mr. Gladstone sat down there were over 500 members in the House; ten minutes afterwards Mr. Cardwell was talking about Army Reform to less than forty."*

This is no place for a detailed exposition of the measure. Mr. Gladstone pointed out the fundamental difference between the land question in

AN IRISH EVICTION IN 1870.

Ireland and in other parts of the United Kingdom. The skeletons of the land laws bore a resemblance, but the flesh and blood with which they were invested were wholly different. "Whereas in England and in Scotland the idea of holding by contract is perfectly traditional and familiar to the mind of every man, in Ireland, on the contrary, where the old Irish ideas and customs were never supplanted except by the rude hand of violence and by laws written in the statute-book which never went to the hearts of the Irish, the people have not generally embraced the idea of the occupation of land by contract; and the old Irish notion, that some interest in the soil adheres to the tenant, even though his contract has expired, is everywhere rooted in the minds of the people."

* "The Inner Life of the House of Commons," by William White, pp. 163, 164.

The great evil to be remedied was the insecurity of the tenant in respect of his holding; and the right remedy could be extracted from the experience of Ulster without causing any shock to the foundations of property. The main provisions of the Bill divided themselves under the heads of acquisition and occupation. The clauses in the first division, and especially the famous Bright clauses, proved to be almost unworkable. In the second division there were four main provisions, corresponding to four descriptions of Irish holdings: (1) those held under the Ulster customs; (2) those held under analogous customs in other parts of the country not having the same traditionary authority; (3) yearly tenancies which enjoyed no kind of protection from custom; (4) tenancies under lease. The Bill took the Ulster custom as it existed, and gave it the force of law. It also legalised the other customs, subject to certain restrictions. Thus it was provided that the tenant should only claim when disturbed by the act of his landlord, but that he should not benefit if evicted for non-payment of rent or for sub-letting; that all arrears of rent and damages might be pleaded as a set-off by the landlord, and that the pleading of any such custom might be barred if the landlord chose to give his tenant a lease for thirty-one years. For tenants at will, the Bill established a scale of damages. But in the case of holdings of more than £50 the landlord might exempt himself from the scale by giving a lease of thirty-one years, and in those of over £100 the parties might contract themselves out of it.

**The Bill Outlined.**

Elaborate and not altogether successful judicial machinery was set up for carrying out the measure. It was provided that in applying the scale of damages, the judges should have regard to the injuries done to the tenants by eviction, and also to the improvements which they had effected. To the question, "What is an improvement?" the Premier replied that an improvement "must add to the letting value of the land," and also that "it must be suitable to the nature of the holding."

Mr. Gladstone himself did not claim that the Bill was perfect, only that it was laboriously and minutely framed with a view to utility and justice. He hoped that on those grounds it would be acceptable to landlords and tenants alike, quoting a fine saying of Sir John Davies, the Attorney-General of James I., that "there is no nation of people under the sun that doth love equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish."*

The effect of the speech may be measured by the division on the second reading, which was carried by 442 to 11. In committee, Mr. Disraeli tried in vain to limit the compensation for eviction. The House of Lords succeeded in inflicting a few small but characteristic "amendments," and the Bill received the Royal assent on the 1st of August.

**The Bill Passed.**

The great object of the measure was to give security of tenure. The means employed were indirect: eviction was made expensive, and the landlord was encouraged to give long leases and to abandon the system of annual lettings; the previous presumption of the law was reversed: all improvements were from that time forward to be presumed to be the property of the tenant, and it was for the landlord to prove the contrary. Speaking after the event, we cannot pretend to affirm that the

**Its Objects and Results.**

* The peroration of this speech, a remarkably fine one, will be found on page 504.

Act was a practical success. There was something to be said for the criticism of an Irish member, who maintained that it placed the landlords in the position of the French lady who said she could not give the fixity of love, but only the security of friendship. It went either too far or not far enough.*

Another measure of first-rate importance was passed during this Session. The Bill providing for elementary education in England and Wales was introduced two days after the Irish Land Bill by Mr. Forster. Based upon the principle of compulsory attendance, it was designed to supplement the Voluntary schools by Board schools, and to place these Board schools under the management of popular bodies called School Boards, elected by the cumulative vote. Many of its clauses were a compromise between State and Voluntary schools, carried in the teeth of Nonconformist opposition with the aid of Conservative votes. It was the beginning of a course of legislation which spread education among the people but sowed dissensions in the party. The "Nonconformist Rebellion" was headed by Mr. Miall. You have led us, he said bitterly, on one occasion, through the Valley of Humiliation, but "once bit, twice shy, and we can't stand this sort of thing much longer." This was too much for a Prime Minister then in the plenitude of his power and popularity:—

**The Elementary Education Bill, 1870.**

**Trouble with Nonconformists.**

> "I hope my hon. friend will not continue his support to the Government one moment longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of duty and right. For God's sake, Sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for the cause he has at heart that he should do so. So long as my hon. friend thinks fit to give us his support we will co-operate with my hon. friend for every purpose we have in common; but when we think his opinions and demands exacting, when we think he looks too much to the section of the community he adorns and too little to the interests of the people at large, we must then recollect that we are the Government of the Queen, and that those who have assumed the high responsibility of administering the affairs of this Empire must endeavour to forget the parts in the whole, and must, in the great measures they introduce into the House, propose to themselves no meaner or narrower object—no other object than the welfare of the Empire at large."

**The Answer to Mr. Miall.**

The opposition to the Education Bill had only developed slowly, as the different clauses were subjected one by one to analysis. "The two great Bills have been well received in England," wrote Dean Church to his friend Dr. Asa Gray on the 1st of March—"not, of course, in Ireland; and Ministers, I hear, are in high spirits, though, of course, they are not out of the wood yet. But certainly no man we have ever had has matched Gladstone in the grasp and daring, combined with thorough detailed knowledge, of his great legislative constructions. Doubtless there are powers stronger than he. But we have not known what a really strong Minister is in all the time between him and Pitt. Peel was very powerful, from his very caution, combined with thorough political integrity; but he had not genius and boldness. Gladstone's weak point is what is most amiable in him, his strong vein of sentiment. It is the spring of what is noblest about his impulses; but it is a perilous

**Dean Church on the two Bills.**

* Hansard, March 11th, 1870.

quality too." On May 26th Lord Shaftesbury entered the following note in his diary:—

"Deputation to Gladstone about Education. The unanimity of the Churchmen and Dissenters—that is, the vast majority of them—is striking and consolatory. Gladstone could now settle the question by a single word. But he will not. He would rather, it is manifest, exclude the Bible altogether than have it admitted and taught without the intervention and agency of catechisms and formularies."

Lord Shaftesbury was wrong about the Dissenters but right about the Prime Minister, who did not like the details of the measure. This we have on the best authority; for in a very interesting criticism of Sir Wemyss Reid's Life of Forster written sixteen years later, Mr. Gladstone stated that "Forster undoubtedly," in reference to the Education Act, "became, in some sense, the scapegoat of the Government," and added: "I do not know that I, personally, can relieve him from much of his responsibility." Mr. Gladstone explained that his own views on the matter were "by no means identical" with those of Forster. "But I am not aware that I ever had occasion, in the course of the proceedings, either to differ from the proposals which were made to me by Lord Ripon and him conjointly, or to press upon them any proposal of my own. My responsibility is that of concurrence rather than of authorship. It might have been otherwise. For, if we had been dealing with a *tabula rasa*, I should have preferred the provisions of the Scotch Education Act, framed by Lord Young, which give to the local School Board a free discretion with regard to denominational education. On the other hand, I do not in any way share the objection, which I think Forster entertained, to a law which should permit a strict limitation of the State-aided as well as of the rate-aided teaching to secular education." *

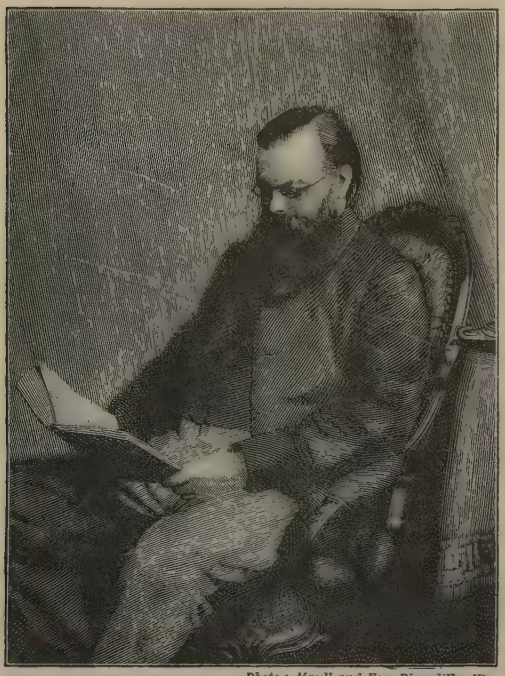


*Photo: Maull and Fox, Piccadilly, W.*

EDWARD MIALL.

**Outbreak of the Franco-German War, 1870.**

When the Parliamentary session was drawing to its close, all interest in domestic politics was suddenly eclipsed† by the outbreak of a struggle which was to change the face of Europe

* *Nineteenth Century*, September, 1888.

† "At a quarter past four to-day a Cabinet box was handed down the Treasury

and alter the balance of power more appreciably than any since the famous campaign of Wellington and Blücher put an end, not indeed to the military supremacy of France, but to the arbitrary dictatorship of Napoleon.

"The unclouded skies of a glorious July seemed, at the commencement of that month only to reflect an equally cloudless tranquillity on the face of Europe. . . . But, before one week of the month had passed, the storm burst upon the world. First came diplomatic mutterings, for which a few days only were allowed. Then followed the ring of weapons making ready for the encounter, and the tramp of armed men. On the 2nd of August, in the insignificant affair of Saarbrück, the Emperor of the French assumed a feeble offensive. On the 4th, the Prussians replied energetically at Wissembourg. And then, what a torrent, what a deluge of events! In twenty-eight days, ten battles were fought. Three hundred thousand men were sent to the hospitals, to captivity, or to the grave. The German enemy had penetrated into the interior of France over a distance of 150 miles of territory, and had stretched forth everywhere as he went the strong hand of possession. The Emperor was a prisoner, and had been deposed with general consent; his family wanderers, none knew where; the embryo, at least, of a republic, born of the hour, had risen on the ruins of the Empire, while proud and gorgeous Paris was awaiting, with divided mind, the approach of the conquering monarch and his countless host."

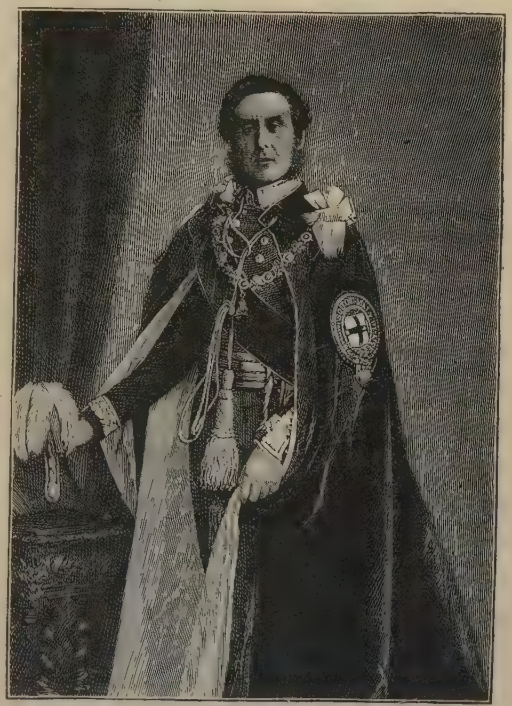


*Photo: Window and Grove, Baker St., W.*

LORD SHAFTESBURY.

So wrote an anonymous reviewer in the October number of the *Edinburgh Review*. He saw that "every joint of the compacted fabric of Continental Europe" had been unset, that there was "not one considerable State" whose positions and prospects had not been "fundamentally modified between the 5th of August and the 5th of September." The anonymous writer was the Prime Minister, and the article, "the only one ever written by me which was meant for the time to be in substance, as well as in form anonymous," was inspired by "motives of public duty." *

**Mr. Gladstone on the War.**

Bench to Gladstone. He opened it, and looking along to us, said—with an accent I shall never forget—'War declared against Prussia.'"—Sir Mountstuart E. Grant Duff's "Notes from a Diary" (July 15th, 1870), vol. ii., p. 153. Similar words are used by Archbishop Tait, who visited the gallery of the House of Commons on hearing the news. "Shall I ever forget," he writes, "Gladstone's face of earnest care when I saw him in the lobby?"—Life of Archbishop Tait, vol. ii., p. 87.

* These motives "both led to its composition and also prevented me from divulging

The article has a political as well as an individual interest. Being anonymous, it represents, as no official speech could represent, the spirit and the aims of the English Government, which was at this time almost as Gladstonian as that of Prussia was Bismarckian. It is only possible to bring out one or two of the salient points. Mr. Gladstone saw in the general situation some grounds for legitimate satisfaction.

**Belgium Saved.**

The integrity of Belgian territory had been preserved and guaranteed by the skilful and vigorous action of Lord Granville; and material for equal congratulation existed in the case of a still smaller State which had been affected in a very different manner.

"France, as was natural, found it needful, on the outbreak of the war, to withdraw her troops from Rome; the decrepit structure of the Pope's Civil Government, on the removal of its prop, immediately began to totter. We may now pronounce it level with the ground; there seems to be scarcely a hope or a fear of its restoration, and possibly the day may come when it may be generally believed that the downfall of the temporal power of the Popedom has, in its ulterior results, been the greatest and most fruitful among all the great and fruitful consequences of the war."

**End of the Papal Government.**

On the other hand there was already reason to fear from some published Bismarckian expressions that Prussia intended to revive "the old and cruel practice of treating the population of a civilised European country as mere chattels" by adding Alsace-Lorraine to the German Empire.

**Mr. Gladstone Deprecates Annexation.**

"We still trust that Count Bismarck has misrepresented his country. But if [not], then we must take leave to say that Germany will yet have to prove her civilisation by some other means than by boasting that six, or that six hundred, letters have been written in good Sanscrit by the soldiers of her army to their friends at home."

Such a policy would only be in keeping with that which had been pursued at the acquisition of Schleswig-Holstein, when a Danish as well as a German population was included within the new frontier. There seemed small promise that the phlegmatic German would prove a safer depository of European military supremacy than the mercurial Frenchman. "Between the piety of the King of Prussia, which we believe never failed him during the Danish transactions, and the policy of the Chancellor of the Confederation, which, whatever else it may have been, has not been Pharisaical, we are sore put to it to decide whether, in the administration of its great prerogative, Germany will be worthy of the confidence of Europe. We may hope, but we cannot venture to affirm."

In dealing with Austria, with its unsolved and insoluble difficulties, Mr. Gladstone exhibited insight as well as foresight, accurate knowledge as well as political sagacity. His analysis of her difficulties,

**Austria's Difficulties.**

racial, religious, and economic, might with few alterations pass more than a quarter of a century later. In the effort to overcome these difficulties "she has right on her side; for her ancient capital and throne form the best and most natural centre for the whole of the inhabitants of the Empire. That they should

the authorship." See note in Gleanings, vol. iv., p. 257. If Mr. Gladstone had known the distinctiveness of his own style he would have realised the impossibility of preserving anonymity. The authorship was disclosed in a few weeks by journalistic enterprise.

be broken up into the minute subdivisions indicated by their specific varieties, would be good neither for Europe at large, nor for the great Eastern question; nor above all for themselves." Carried away by his sympathies, Mr. Gladstone, as usual, became hopeful and constructive:—"Something in the nature of a Federal monarchy, with a balance of power resembling that which has been established in the American Union by the great war of 1861–5, is probably the adjustment best suited to her case; and to the best result, be it what it may, we trust that she may gradually feel and find her way."

The political lesson for Great Britain is drawn in two sentences, which deserve the attention of that most unreflecting of sensationalists, our modern patriot of the music-hall: "While everything combines to make us safe, everything also combines to make us harmless. To judge from recent experience, the relative share of maritime force in aggressive warfare is dwindling: and we are a Power essentially, incurably maritime." As regards the Colonies, we had learnt that the secret of free autonomy was a specific both for the vigorous well-being of the dependency and the integrity of the Empire.* We were beginning to regard the Empire in India as "a moral trusteeship," to be administered for the benefit of those over whom we ruled. The doctrine of Imperial land-grabbing seemed to be discredited, and with the "avidity for material extension" had been lost its customary ally, "a preternatural and morbid sensibility." Mr. Gladstone did not see that the comparative freedom of English opinion at that time from the vice of jingoism and the lust of territorial aggrandisement was due far more to his own unexampled influence and personal ascendancy than to "the wise dispensation of Providence which has cut her off by that streak of silver sea. . . . partly from the dangers, absolutely from the temptations, which attend upon the local neighbourhood of the Continental nations."

**Lessons for Ourselves.**

Thus led on, Mr. Gladstone catches a glimpse of his ideal—that ideal which he had sketched out in the Don Pacifico debate, and which he now saw, or thought he saw, on the way to realisation:—

> "Certain it is that a new law of nations is gradually taking hold of the mind, and coming to sway the practice, of the world; a law which recognises independence, which frowns upon aggression, which favours the pacific, not the bloody settlement of disputes, which aims at permanent and not temporary adjustments; above all, which recognises, as a tribunal of paramount authority, the general judgment of civilised mankind. It has censured the aggression of France; it will censure, if need arise, the greed of Germany.* '*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*' It is hard for all nations to go astray. Their ecumenical council sits above the partial passions of those who are misled by interest, and disturbed by quarrel. The greatest triumph of our time, a triumph in a region loftier than that of electricity and steam, will be the enthronement of this idea of Public Right as the governing idea of European policy; as the common and precious inheritance of all lands, but superior to the passing opinion of any."

On the 1st of November, 1870, Mr. Gladstone made some interesting remarks at a public ceremonial in connection with the Workmen's International

* Curiously enough Mr. Gladstone explicitly separated the case of Ireland from that of the Colonies:—"As regards the three kingdoms, the policy of Parliament is aimed at making them a perfectly compacted body, and raising them to the highest level of intelligence and civil energy. Ireland, our ancient reproach, can no longer fling her grievances in the face of Great Britain."

Exhibition, in which he compared Irish and English manufactures. The Irish, he thought, showed more taste. Competition was needed to bring out the best qualities of Englishmen as manufacturers. In the same month Mr. Dean, M.P. for Queen's County, enclosed a memorial from the inhabitants of Stradbally, asking for such diplomatic intervention as might secure to the Pope enough of temporal sovereignty to protect him in the discharge of his spiritual duties. Mr. Gladstone wrote in reply from Downing Street on November 30th, that the English Government had not interfered and did not propose to interfere with the civil government of the city of Rome. "But her Majesty's Government consider all that relates to the adequate support of the dignity of the Pope, and to his personal freedom and independence in the discharge of his spiritual functions, to be legitimate matter for their notice. Indeed, without waiting for the occurrence of an actual necessity, they have, during the uncertainties of the last few months, taken upon themselves to make provision which would have tended to afford any necessary protection to the person of the Sovereign Pontiff." The publication of a letter which was intended to soothe Irish Romanism, had the effect of alarming English Protestantism, and a month later there came the usual inquiry, this time from the Birmingham Committee of the Protestant Association, whether the report was true that Mr. Gladstone had joined the Church of Rome. The Free Church Presbytery of Scotland also expressed "apprehensions." On the other hand, no satisfaction was given to the opposite camp. The Roman Catholic newspapers made unfavourable comments.

**Protection for the Pope.**

In the middle of December, Mr. Gladstone acceded to a petition for the release of Fenian convicts on condition that they left and did not return to the United Kingdom. "That decision, they are well aware, is in accordance with strong opinions and compassionate feelings very widely prevalent in Ireland, but, happily, not displaying themselves in any popular agitation or any turbulent demands, such as would render compliance inconsistent with the due authority of Government."

**Release of Fenians.**

With the year 1871 we reach the turning-point in the career of the Administration. Mr. Gladstone was still projecting reforms; but the country showed signs of weariness and uneasiness, and the House of Lords plucked up courage. Mr. Disraeli and Lord Salisbury became hopeful and aggressive, and it was found more and more difficult to turn Bills into Acts of Parliament. The loss which the Government had sustained by the defection of the Nonconformists was followed on the first day of the new year by the announcement of the resignation of Mr. Bright, whose health had completely broken down.

**The Turning-point Reached, 1871.**

In many quarters administrative reforms had awakened a disreputable dissatisfaction. It is a maxim of those who govern according to the strict principles of opportunism, and for the good, not of the governed, but of the ruling body, that it is safer to protect and indulge privileged classes than to invigilate over the interests of a nation. From the day that Mr. Gladstone entered office this important maxim had been consistently and persistently violated. One by one the regular lines down which illustrious families had shunted incapable sons were

being closed to private traffic and thrown open to public competition. In the midsummer of 1871, by an Order in Council of the preceding year, all entrance appointments in the Civil Service—the Foreign Office, Diplomatic Service, and posts requiring professional knowledge excepted—had been thrown open to ability and merit, so far as those qualities can be measured by public examination.

Civil Service Reform.

An attempt was also made to reduce the expenditure and improve the efficiency of State departments. Mr. Gladstone's own theories on the

DOWNING STREET, SHOWING MR. GLADSTONE'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE.

subject had been expounded during his election campaign to the burgesses of Warrington in the following very remarkable language:—

"Individuals, and knots and groups, and even classes of men, have a constant, quick, unsleeping interest in feeding themselves upon the produce of the public industry. The natural counterpoise to that perfectly natural tendency on the part of individuals and classes is in the vigilance of the public mind. It is by the public sentiment operating vigorously on the one hand, and by the natural tendency of public servants, and professional men, and particular classes on the other, to struggle in particular for their own interests, that the equilibrium—a fair and just balance—is maintained. But if the public go to sleep, the other power, gentlemen, never goes to sleep. On the contrary, it watches for its opportunity. There is not,

speaking generally, a single class of persons interested in the produce of the taxes that is not very naturally awake to consider what opportunities it may have of improving its position. And, unfortunately, there is this unhappy circumstance inherent in the condition of a public servant, that, whereas the man who pursues other branches of industry—when he improves his position, for instance, in a matter of commerce or of manufacture—a man who increases the produce of the soil, a man who increases the produce of the loom, or of the forge, or of the mine, in improving his own social position, improves the position of other people. But, unhappily, when those who are interested in the produce of the taxes improve their own position, I do not well see how the consequence is to be avoided, that they may in many cases improve it rather at the expense than for the advantage of the people. Gentlemen, I do not say that for the purpose of fastening any stigma upon them. I believe that this country is as well served and as honestly served as any country ever was. Nay, more, I will say this: it has been my happy fortune to know in the public service and in the civil service of this country many men who have rendered the labour of their nights and days to the advantage of the State with a spirit as disinterested and as noble as would have done honour to any station of life or any period of the world." *

The Admiralty was at that time in a state of rusty antiquity. Mr. Childers set to work. He concentrated the Fleet, reduced a surplus of unemployed clerks and dockyard hands, and laid down some common-sense rules for promotion and retirement.† Among other changes involved by these administrative reforms was the closing of the dockyard at Woolwich. It was a step which had only the cold commendation of a public advantage to recommend it to Mr. Gladstone's constituents. In the January of 1871 a petition was extensively signed in Greenwich, calling upon Mr. Gladstone to resign, because he had betrayed the generous confidence of the electorate: "Our trade has completely departed, our dockyards are silent—a fact of which Russia seems cognisant—and, in a word, your ill-timed and miserable economy has converted this old historic place into a scene of pauperism and disorder." If its English had been a little better, the petition might have been drafted by Disraeli. Shortly afterwards a notice of a meeting was posted in a few of the Greenwich public-houses. The circular was, of course, fabricated by the Tories, and this made the last sentence especially piquant: "We respectfully yet firmly demand the restoration of our much abused trust."

Woolwich Dockyard Closed, 1871.

A week afterwards a public meeting was called in Greenwich, and resulted in a free fight. During the first hour a gang of sixty roughs dominated the proceedings and carried resolutions against Mr. Gladstone. Then the majority asserted itself, and the roughs were ejected. For the time, Mr. Gladstone was too busy to defend himself before his constituents.

The course of the Franco-German War involved the Government in many difficult and delicate questions: "Scarcely a week or a fortnight, indeed, passed without them—upon which we had to consider nice matters for intervention—I mean intervention by request and expostulation."

* October 12th, 1868.

† Great saving was effected by the supersession of ineffective and useless vessels. The fleet at home was strengthened. Two turret ships, to be "the most powerful afloat," were laid down in 1869. The reduction of the fleets and armies in outlying parts of the Empire, carried out by Childers and Cardwell, had been one of the planks in the South Lancashire platform.

At the instance of Germany, and in the interests of humanity, the English Government tried, for some time in vain but eventually with success, to induce the Powers to sanction the principle that wounded soldiers might be carried through neutral territory.* Meanwhile Prince Bismarck, intent on conciliating Russia, had begun to show coolness towards England, in order to give proofs of friendship to his new ally. At first this coolness was difficult to understand; but the terms of the compact were soon made clear. In the middle of November Russia suddenly issued a circular repudiating an important clause in the Treaty of 1856. England, Italy, Austria, and Turkey protested. Bismarck cleverly proposed a conference, to which all parties agreed; but it was plain that he had purchased the non-interference of Russia in his own designs upon the integrity of French territory by promising to allow Russia to build and maintain a fleet in the Black Sea. The conduct of England was not very dignified. We had no interests to justify us in going to war. As it was, we made an ineffective protest, and accepted Bismarck's proposal for a conference which simply registered and ratified the violation of the Treaty.

Foreign Affairs.

Russia Repudiates the Black Sea Clause, 1871.

There were many attempts to drag England into the war. A memorandum was signed by the English Comtists and other influential publicists in favour of intervention. M. Guizot wrote a pathetic letter to Mr. Gladstone—it was published in the *Times*, and occupied four columns—entreating him to step in and save France in consideration of what she had done for civilisation and liberty. But the English Government would not budge from its attitude of neutrality. If a point was stretched in favour of the party with which Mr. Gladstone's sympathies lay, it was only in the expression of an earnest desire "that the extreme measure of bombardment should not be had recourse to against a magnificent and beautiful city."

England's Intervention Requested.

Surviving the criticisms which Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Auberon Herbert, and Sir Charles Dilke levelled against his foreign policy, Mr. Gladstone quickly provided the House of Commons with work for the Session. The Ecclesiastical Titles Act was repealed, University tests were abolished. A Bill to establish secret voting (the Ballot Bill) passed the House of Commons and was thrown out by the Lords. But in the following year the Peers gave way on the main amendment, which would have made secret voting optional, and the measure (which had been introduced by Mr. Forster) received the Royal assent during the Session of 1872.

The Ballot, 1871.

In this year (1871) the expenditure on the Army and Navy reached the lowest point it had touched since 1858. A special vote of credit for £2,000,000 had been taken at the outbreak of the Franco-German War; but there was a large surplus, and Mr. Gladstone was encouraged to carry out the abolition of Army Purchase, at a cost of several millions. Mr. Lowe, in his Budget, estimated a large deficiency for the coming financial year, which he proposed to meet by adding a penny to the income tax, by increasing the succession duties, and imposing halfpenny and penny stamps upon match-

* In this instance Luxemburg.

boxes. Mr. Lowe thought that every box should be allowed to wear the motto "Ex luce lucellum." The tax was justifiable; for the trade is a bad one, and matches are a commodity in which a decrease of consumption would be a positive advantage. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not conciliatory; and his Latin could not save the tax from unpopularity. The match-manufacturers blazed with indignation. The processions of their wretched match-girls attracted public sympathy and alarmed the Government, and in a very few days Mr. Gladstone announced that the proposal would be withdrawn.

**The Proposed Match Tax, 1871.**

Not so the Bill for the abolition of the Purchase System. While that system existed, effective re-organisation of the army was impossible. It had become necessary, as Mr. Gladstone put it, for the nation to buy back its own army from its own officers. The House of Lords, duly subordinating the temptations of patriotism to the claims of wealth, passed a Resolution with the object of putting the obnoxious measure out of the way, without actually rejecting the Bill. But Mr. Gladstone was not to be thwarted. He had thrown open the Civil Service by an Order in Council, and he determined to operate on the army by cancelling a Royal Warrant. There was a scene of great excitement in the House of Commons on the 20th of July, 1871, when he explained how he had superseded the House of Lords in language which would have led one to believe that he was apologising for some unnecessarily pedantic observance of constitutional usage. After pointing out that any member of the House of Lords might still move the Second Reading and other stages of the measure, he proceeded:—

**Abolition of Army Purchase, 1871.**

**Cancelling a Royal Warrant.**

"That being so, I have to remind the House of Commons that the question of Army Purchase is a question, which, not by the Constitution merely, which assigns to the Executive the ordinary administration of the Army, but by the action of statute, is taken out, if I may say so, of the hands of the Legislature. By statute it is enacted that only such terms of purchase as it may please her Majesty to allow by Royal Warrant shall be permitted. The effect of that enactment is that the existence of Purchase, so far as its legislative basis is concerned, is made to depend on the action of the Executive Government; while so far as concerns the indemnity to those who have paid prices for commissions, that portion of the subject belongs to the House of Commons.

"Nevertheless, the matter being one of so much magnitude and interest, the Government would not have thought it reasonable or competent for them to take any important or vital step with respect to Purchase without having recourse to the opinion of that House. That opinion we obtained in the most authentic manner, and after long debates the judgment of the House was pronounced against the continuance of Purchase, on the terms and conditions set forth in the legislative measure which passed the House of Commons. Proceeding from there to the House of Lords, the measure conveyed to the other House and to the country the judgment of the House on the point so fully and absolutely that in that respect there was nothing to desire, and the Executive Government felt that it was no longer incumbent on them or required of them by any consideration of public convenience that they should again solicit the House of Commons for a declaration which they had obtained in the most authentic manner.

"This being so, with the view we entertained of the illegality of over-regulation prices, and with the declaration before us of the Royal Commission that those over-regulation prices could not be put an end to except by the extinction of Purchase as a system, the Government resolved to advise her Majesty to take the decisive step of cancelling the Royal Warrant under which Purchase was legal.

This executive act, bold and masterful in substance, subtly constitutional in form, wholly beneficial in its consequences, is thoroughly characteristic of the man. "It was," said an able publicist, "dictated by an exclusive regard for the public advantage, and so decisively approved by the public voice that no attempt was made to obtain a vote of censure upon it in the House of Commons." As a rebuff to the pretensions of heredity, it may be compared with the device by which the repeal of the Paper Duty was carried. A prerogative of the Crown was used to checkmate

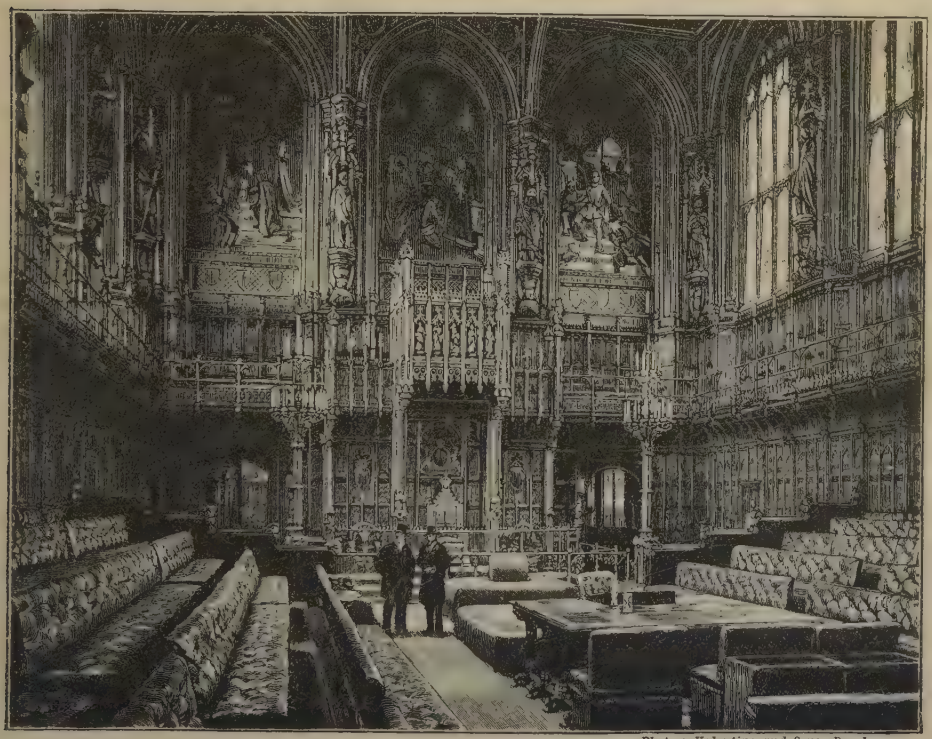


*Photo: Valentine and Sons, Dundee.*

INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

the Peers. That the action was bold and high-handed cannot be disputed. It may yet form a precedent to the democratic statesman of the future for extinguishing the powers of the hereditary Chamber. That Mr. Gladstone himself had some thoughts of taking a decisive step in that direction is indicated by a letter which he wrote from Whitby * at the end of August in reply to a resolution passed at Leeds upon the conduct of the House of Lords in refusing to consider the Ballot Bill. He regretted both the vote and the grounds of the vote, "nor do I less regret its consequences; for I am mindful of the signal services shown to have been rendered to this country by its nobles . . . . as well as

* For which town his eldest son was now a member

of the serious difficulties which other countries have experienced in providing means for the discharge of the functions now intrusted to it by the Constitution."

On the 2nd of September Mr. Gladstone addressed a meeting at Whitby, at which he spoke of the criticisms that were being passed on the Government by the Press: "Sometimes reading an article in a newspaper, I might almost suppose, after reading through an interminable catalogue of the follies and crimes I have committed, that I must be little less than a monster; but the people of this country, sensible of the blessings of a free Press worked with freedom and immense despatch, know also that it requires to be read, especially at times and seasons, with some reserve and reflective judgment, and it is to the people I look to redress the balance of the Press if the Press goes wrong." The metropolitan newspapers had been more severe than the provincial. In London class interests were concentrated. There wealth was all powerful; and "wealth has taken desperate offence because the Government has recommended to Parliament that power in the English Army should no longer be the prize of wealth but the reward of merit." Mr. Gladstone advised the people of Whitby to beware of a tendency to express which he coined the world "alarmism," and he protested against "a petty, peddling, narrow policy of meddling with the affairs of other nations," a policy which was, he feared, becoming fashionable. This speech alarmed Lord Houghton. He called it a "high mountain" speech, and wrote to expostulate with Mr. Gladstone as to some of his expressions about property. He thought public men ought to be grateful for private riches. Only the demon of demophilism would deprecate individual fortunes. Were they not the reserves of public wealth? Mr. Gladstone replied cautiously: "I do not agree with everything you say."

A Reply to the Press.

From Whitby Mr. Gladstone went to Thornes House, near Wakefield, the residence of his old Eton friend, Mr. J. Milnes Gaskell. The Liberal Association of Wakefield presented him with an address. Mr. Gladstone in his reply dwelt with regret upon the commercial policy of other nations. France had "denounced" the Commercial Treaty negotiated by Mr. Cobden in 1860; in our Colonies, too, there were strong tendencies to the exploded system of Protection; and even in America, "though it has a strong Free Trade party, the prevalence of those opinions is by no means assured." Mr. Gladstone maintained that although much had undoubtedly been done by the steam-engine and the telegraph, Free Trade had been the main agent in raising the commerce of the United Kingdom to its extraordinary position of supremacy:—

Free Trade.

> "I apprehend that I am stating the matter very moderately if I put it thus: that in the course of the last thirty years our population has increased somewhere about 25 or 30 per cent. while our trade in the same period has increased at a ratio of something certainly not much under 400 per cent."

In the month of September Mr. Gladstone was presented with the freedom of the city of Aberdeen. The chief event since his last speech had been the unopposed return to Parliament of Mr. Butt, the leader of the Home Rule party in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone's speech is of interest as the first and last in which he opposed the principle of Home Rule.

Irish Home Rule 1871.

"Has Ireland great grievances? What is it that Ireland has demanded from the Imperial Government, and that the Imperial Government has refused? So far as my research has gone. . . . I have seen nothing, except that it is stated there is a vast quantity of fish in the seas that surround Ireland, and that if they had Home Rule they would catch a great deal of these fish. But there are fish in the sea which surround England and Scotland. England has no Home Rule and Scotland has no Home Rule. But we manage to catch the fish."

Further, if Home Rule were established in Ireland, what of Scotland and Wales? Surely these had equal claims. Mr. Gladstone saw no exceptional remaining Irish grievance except in regard to University education. For that, unfortunately, no demand had been put into practical shape; still he was desirous of legislating on the subject. One passage is emphatic:—

"Can any sensible man, can any rational man, suppose that at this time of day, in this condition of the world, we are going to disintegrate the great capital institutions of this country for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of all mankind and crippling any power we possess for bestowing benefits through legislation on the country to which we belong? One word more only on the subject, my Lord Provost, and it is this:—People say that we have tried to conciliate Ireland, and that we have failed. I do not admit that Ireland is not going to be conciliated, but I must say this—we must always keep in mind that there is a higher law to govern the actions of Parliaments and of politicians than the law of conciliation, good as that law may be. We desired to conciliate Ireland; we desired to soothe her people. We desired to attach her to this island by the silken cords of love. But there was a higher and a paramount aim in the measures that Parliament has passed. It was to set itself right with the national conscience, with the opinion of the civilised world, and with the principles of justice."

Oddly enough the last part of his speech, which was devoted to the growing needs of the country for legislation and the inadequacy of Parliament to meet them, indicated the true argument for Home Rule—the need of devolution. This argument he never met; indeed, he admitted before sitting down that "if it be possible for Parliament, without breaking up its vigour and unity of action, and its paramount authority, to arrange to readjust its machinery in such a way as to give greater facility and expedition in the despatch of those large portions of its business which are either local or social or non-political, there can be no doubt that the accomplishment of that object will be matter of the highest interest and importance to the communities of the three kingdoms." *

**The Blackheath Speech, 1871.**

A very difficult task remained. Mr. Gladstone had still to quell the disaffection of his own constituents at Greenwich. He had not addressed them since his return in 1868. Covered hustings were erected in the north-eastern corner of Blackheath, and from 10,000 to 12,000 people gathered on a cold Saturday afternoon in October to listen to the "apology." "There was something dramatic," wrote an eye-witness of the scene—

"in the intense silence which fell upon the vast crowd when the renewed burst of cheering with which he was greeted had subsided. But the first word he spoke was the signal of a fearful tempest of din. From all around the skirts of the crowd rose a something between

* September 26th, 1871. On the same day Disraeli was presiding at the annual dinner of the Hughenden Agricultural Society. He was in high spirits. The barley was bright, the oats were golden, and "the sunny slopes" were "ripe and rich with succulent fruits."

a groan and a howl. So fierce was it that for a little space it might laugh to scorn the burst of cheering that strove to overmaster it. The battle raged between the two sounds, and looking straight upon the excited crowd stood Mr. Gladstone, calm, resolute, patient. It was fine to note the manly British impulse of fair-play that gained him a hearing when the first ebullition had exhausted itself, and the revulsion that followed so quickly and spontaneously on the realisation of the suggestion that it was mean to hoot a man down without giving him a chance to speak for himself. After that Mr. Gladstone may be said to have had it all his own way. Of course at intervals there were repetitions of the interruptions. When he first broached the dockyard question there was long, loud, and fervent groaning; when he named Ireland a cry rose of 'God save Ireland!' from the serried files of Hibernians that had rendezvoused on the left flank. But long before he had finished he had so enthralled his audience that impatient disgust was expressed at the handful who still continued their abortive efforts at interruption. When at length the two hours' oration was over, and the question was put—that substantially was, whether Mr. Gladstone had cleared away from the judgment of his constituency the fog of prejudice and ill-feeling that unquestionably encircled him and his Ministry—the affirmative reply was given in bursts of all but unanimous cheering, than which none more earnest ever greeted a political leader."

ISAAC BUTT.

The speech was not an elaborate and detailed defence of his measures. Mr. Gladstone admitted that four important Bills brought forward during that session had failed to be passed into law.* But he knew that it was with administration rather than legislation that the Greenwich mind was occupied, and he plunged headlong into the unpopular topic of dockyard economies. These he defended with much vigour, explaining, however, to the astonishment and dismay of the discontented Tory rabble, that out of a total of 5,000 discharged dockyard labourers, 4,000 had been dismissed by the previous Conservative Ministry before leaving office.

It must not be supposed that this famous speech is destined to survive the memories of those who heard it. But even in the Blackheath oration there is one passage which will bear quotation; for it carries a characteristic warning against the vast expectations and promis f social reformers:—

"I will say they are quacks; they are deluded and beguiled by a spurious philanthropy. Let the Government labour to its utmost; let the Legislature labour days and nights in your service; but after the best has been attained and achieved, the question whether the English father is to be the father of a happy family and the centre of a united home, is a question which must depend mainly upon himself. And those who promise to the dwellers in towns that every one of them shall have a house and garden

* The Scotch Education Bill, the Mines Regulation Bill, the Local Government and Taxation Bill—an admirable measure introduced by Mr. Goschen, by which the rates would have been consolidated and divided between owner and occupier—and Mr. Bruce's Licensing Bill, introduced on the same fatal day as the Local Government Bill, the day from which electioneering experts dated the decline of the Government.

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MR. GLADSTONE SPEAKING AT BLACKHEATH IN 1871.

in free air, with ample space; those who tell you that there shall be markets for selling at wholesale prices retail quantities—I won't say are impostors, because I have no doubt they are sincere; but I will say they are quacks."

For a time it seemed that the Blackheath speech might give the Administration a fresh lease of popularity. The metropolitan press was mollified. But this did not last long. The Conservatives won several successes at the bye-elections, and the flames of discontent, fanned by failure, blazed up afresh. On November 24th "A Whig" wrote from Brooks's Club to inform the editor of the *Times* about the Liberal discontents and their causes:—

"Conservative reaction is very small, but Liberal discomfort is very great. All that the Liberal party with a majority of eighty or one hundred ask is a quiet life; but that is not allowed us. . . . During the last twelve months we have seen a want of tact, of true liberality, of good taste, of good manners, of consideration for the permanent officials (who, after all, are the true executive), of sympathy with public opinion, of common sense in treating questions of the day, that has worn out our patience and made us angry and hostile. The unfortunate match-tax, the illogical income-tax, the ill-timed closing of the dockyards, the Admiralty scandals, the losses of the *Captain* and the *Megæra*, the dismissal of Sir Spencer Robinson and Mr. Reed, the story of the good anchors and the bad biscuits, the universal discontent of all Government clerks and officials, the threatened increase in the succession duty, the threatened taxes on land, the impossible Licensing Bill, the startling exercise of prerogative, the hopeless persistency in the Ballot Bill, the inconceivable obstinacy of combating the public demand for the preservation of Epping and the New Forests and the Thames Embankment . . . . these and other petty economies have been so cleverly devised as to rub up everyone the wrong way, from 'the lord in his drag to the chummy on his moke,' as the sporting papers express it. Everybody's corns have been trodden on, a skeleton discovered in everyone's cupboard."

In the spring of 1872 two of Mr. Gladstone's recent appointments were challenged in Parliament, and the Government narrowly escaped censure. An Act of Parliament of 1871 provided that four paid judges should be added to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in order to enable it to overtake its arrears of Colonial Appeals. One of these vacancies proved difficult to fill. Three English judges refused it.

Sir Robert Collier's Appointment, 1872.

The Government determined that Sir Robert Collier (Lord Monkswell), then Attorney-General, should be appointed. To give him the necessary qualification the Lord Chancellor (Lord Hatherley), with whom Mr. Gladstone divided responsibility,* appointed him to a vacant Puisne Judgeship in the Court of Common Pleas. There he sat for a few days and was then appointed by Mr. Gladstone to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In opposing the vote of censure Mr. Gladstone took up high constitutional ground:—

"What do you intend to be the relation between the Legislature in time to come and the judges of the land? At present you are strictly restrained from interference, except in one most solemn and formal manner. You are not to tamper with the question whether judges are in this or in that particular assailable. You are not to

* "February 1st, 1872.—Frank Doyle the other day said that the division of responsibility between the Chancellor and Mr. Gladstone in the recent appointment of Collier to the judgeship in the Privy Council, so as to make each individually innocent, reminded him of Sterne's story of the Abbess of Andouillet and the novice, when dividing between them the pronunciation of the naughty words used to make the obstinate mule get on."—Sir F. Pollock's "Personal Remembrances," vol. ii., p. 238.

inflict upon them a minor punishment. You have never thought it wise to give opinions in criticism or in reprobation of their conduct when they have casually gone astray. Once in my life—I will not say to which portion of the dominions of her Majesty I refer—it has so happened to me, as a member of the Executive Government, to be called upon to consider the conduct of a judge who had most rashly and culpably reflected upon the proceedings of a Legislature, and had undoubtedly exposed himself to our severe reproof. But what view did we afterwards take of the matter? We came to the conclusion that as the act was not an act with respect to which it would be right to ask Parliament to address the Crown for his removal, it was not an act of which hostile notice should be taken at all. Are you prepared to say that you will venture upon breaking down that fence which, by your own wisdom—it is not by any external power—prevents you from intermeddling with the character of the judges by means of votes which dare not aim at their removal, but which at the same time have a certain tendency to lower their character and to impair their credit and authority?"

It would be difficult to find anywhere a more admirable exposition of the relationship which ought to exist between the Legislature and the Judicature. Not less effective was his defence of the particular appointment:—

"What are the presumptive rights of an Attorney-General? He has a presumptive right* to be appointed to the office of Lord Chief Baron, and he is perfectly eligible, subject to the discretion of the Government, to fill the office of Lord Chief Justice, the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, to hold the office of Lord Keeper, and he might even have looked to the office of Lord Chancellor as that to which he might, as Attorney-General, be advanced without any intermediate stage of probation; and, therefore, it is not unfair to say we have appointed a man who presumably must be regarded as having something more to recommend him than mere fitness for the office to which he has been advanced. Is the House aware what the practice has been for a great length of time with regard to the promotion of an Attorney-General? Since the Revolution, we have had, I think, fifty-four Attorney-Generals, and out of that number, deducting those who died and those who retired, more than one-half have been promoted at once either to the office of Lord Chancellor, or of Lord Keeper, or of Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench, or of Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer, or of Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. That is the elevation or the promotion to which, in practice, the Attorney-General of this country has been able to look."

But plain men did not like Mr. Gladstone's fine distinctions between judicial *status* and judicial experience in the case of Sir Robert Collier; nor could they in the companion "scandal" be induced —to borrow one of Mr. George Russell's happy phrases— "to appreciate the difference between membership of the University of Oxford and membership of the Convocation of Oxford." It should be said that the Rectory was offered to an Oxford man, and refused, before Mr. Gladstone thought it necessary to "qualify" a Cambridge clergyman. A great deal of annoyance and bad feeling was excited. "I never could understand," wrote a Christ Church contemporary of Mr. Gladstone's in 1891, "why W. E. G. was anxious to give Ewelme to Mr. Harvey. It was absurd to say that there was no Oxford graduate fit for the Rectory."

The Ewelme "Scandal," 1872.

During these years the movement for the disestablishment of the Church of England had been growing in strength, and Mr. Gladstone

* Mr. Gladstone was speaking before the passing of the Judicature Act.

was constantly subjected to pressure by a strong section of his supporters. The Premier was watchful and uneasy. In his view the chief danger to the Church lay in its tendency to comprehensiveness and Erastianism. Two years earlier Dean Stanley had admitted a Unitarian minister to the Holy Communion. A note by Bishop Wilberforce of a conversation with Mr. Gladstone shows the strength of the Premier's prejudices:—

**The Church of England.**

"Talked of 'Westminster Scandal'—the 'right name.' Of little import when merely Stanley's eccentricity; but the Bishops' speeches, especially Bishop of Salisbury's. 'How difficult with temper of House of Commons to maintain Church, if such the internal voice! No organic change will be made whilst I am in power. But that may be a short time.'" *

Another, dated Hawarden, September 3rd, 1872, gives a similar impression:—

"To early church with W. E. G., as lovable as ever. . . . Talk with Gladstone on Athanasian Creed; for no violence; would keep all possible; suspects it as only a preliminary of attack on Prayer-Book."

The early seventies were years of great legislative activity; and the reforms which were actually accomplished encouraged hopes of more sweeping and revolutionary changes. Mr. Gladstone was ready, if necessary, to resist a fundamental change in ecclesiastical polity. He was actually called upon to resist a movement for a far more fundamental change in the British Constitution. The overthrow of the French Empire had led to a revival of Republicanism in England; and a small group of able men, among whom Sir Charles Dilke was conspicuous, endeavoured by lectures and speeches to bring the question into the region of practical politics. Some proposals brought forward in the House of Commons in 1871 had made it necessary for Mr. Gladstone to defend the Civil List and protect Sovereignty itself against a reduction of its endowments. He suggested that in considering the emoluments of the Crown and the grants made to the Royal Family, the House of Commons should also "look at the valuable acquirements made by the people in the parks of London and the parks in the neighbourhood, which have been devoted for every practical purpose to the benefit of the nation. What would be the income of the Crown if the parks in London were cut up into building lots, and the parks in the neighbourhood of London were laid out for the erection of villas—that is, if this land had been used by the Crown for years past as it would have been used if it had belonged to private contractors? In that case, I think a million a year would have been no immoderate estimate." From the economic he passed to the political defence. "But the truth is, that this is a very narrow view of the case to take. There is a much deeper and a much broader question involved. The competent support—not the lavish and extravagant, but the competent and becoming support—of the Crown and Royal Family is an important part of our political system. It is not the money paid back from the Crown lands into the Exchequer that forms the equivalent. That equivalent is the political benefit and blessing that we enjoy."†

**Republicanism in England.**

* Life of Bishop Wilberforce, vol. iii., p. 367.

† Speech in the House of Commons, February 13th, 1871.

Perhaps the most revolutionary measure for which Mr. Gladstone is responsible is the Ballot Act, passed, as we have already said, in the year 1872.* It was indeed the natural and necessary corollary of household suffrage, for it afforded the poor and dependent voter the only possible protection against the influences of property. In Great Britain the most sensible effect of the measure was the comparative order which it introduced into Parliamentary and municipal elections. But in Ireland it

The Ballot Act, 1872.

*Photo: Cassell and Co., Lim.*

HAWARDEN CHURCH.

struck at the root of the political power of the landlords; the influence of Roman priests displaced that of Anglican parsons, and from this time the Irish representatives tended to represent the Irish people instead

* Mr. Bright, who often spoke bluntly what Mr. Gladstone thought, said, when the Peers at last gave way: "The House of Lords—which seems to be almost the last refuge of political ignorance and passion—the House of Lords has consented to the establishment of vote by ballot, by which perfect security and independence will be given to every elector."

of the owners of the soil. The cry for Home Rule began to be heard in the House of Commons.

To this year also belongs a great moral achievement. During the Civil War in America, the English Government had permitted privateers, built and armed for the Southerners by private firms in England, to escape from English ports and prey upon Northern vessels. A Conservative Government had the credit of commencing the negotiations which led to the submission of the American claims (called the *Alabama* claims after the most successful of the privateers) to an international Court of Arbitration. Mr. Gladstone's Government had all the discredit and unpopularity of carrying through the negotiations, of submitting to the unfavourable award of the Geneva Court,* and of paying—out of current revenue—in satisfaction and final settlement of all claims, the sum of about three and a quarter millions sterling. In 1880 Mr. Gladstone, discussing the possibility of international disarmament, referred to the *Alabama* case in these memorable words:—

The Alabama Claims, 1872.

"Need I [say] that the dispositions which led us to become parties to the arbitration on the *Alabama* case are still with us the same as ever: that we are not discouraged; that we are not damped in the exercise of these feelings by the fact that we were amerced, and severely amerced, by the sentence of the international tribunal; and that, although we may think the sentence was harsh in its extent and unjust in its basis, we regard the fine imposed on this country as dust in the balance compared with the moral value of the example set when these two great nations of England and America, which are among the most fiery and the most jealous in the world with regard to anything that touches national honour, went in peace and concord before a judicial tribunal to dispose of these painful differences, rather than resort to the arbitrament of the sword."

It might have been thought that responsible statesmen not in office would have recognised the great service conferred upon the nation, or at least have stood aside while the clouds of popular indignation burst on the devoted heads of her Majesty's Ministers. But Mr. Disraeli preferred to "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm." In a celebrated speech at the Crystal Palace he appealed to the working classes of England, to their pride in "belonging to an Imperial country," and prophesied—this was a couple of months before the award—that "the time was at hand—at least it would not be long distant—when England would have to decide between national and cosmopolitan principles." Those who heard the cheering might have foreseen the approaching change in the balance of parties; those who pondered the sentiment might perhaps have speculated about the future possibility of "Peace with Honour."

The unpopularity of the Government was increased by the Licensing Act of 1872. Before that year no publican was compelled to close his premises, except for an hour between one and two o'clock in the morning, even in London and those large towns which had adopted the Public House Closing Act, while elsewhere public-houses might be kept open all night long. The Act fixed midnight as the closing hour for London, and eleven o'clock for the rest of England, giving the magistrates discretionary power to substitute any other closing hour between ten and twelve. Further,

The Licensing Act, 1872.

* Issued on the 14th of September, 1872.

partly by endorsement clauses, partly by improved police regulations, the Act made orderly management of licensed houses a little less improbable. Lastly, it put some check upon the multiplication of licences. This excellent but inadequate measure was soon represented as the crowning iniquity of the Liberal party. It was carried amid violent protests, which were revived at the General Election, and conveniently forgotten when the friends of the licensed victuallers returned to power.*

The vigour of Reform was nearly exhausted. "As time advanced it was not difficult to perceive that extravagance was being substituted for energy by the Government. The unnatural stimulus was subsiding. Their paroxysms ended in prostration. Some took refuge in melancholy, and their eminent chief alternated between a menace and a sigh. As I sat opposite the Treasury Bench the Ministers reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea." Such is the brilliant picture of the situation of her Majesty's Ministers, drawn with rich if excessive colouring by the Leader of the Opposition in the month of April, 1872.†

A Speech on Archæology.

But the Premier did not allow political troubles to monopolise his attention. On the 3rd of December a paper upon a cuneiform inscription containing a Chaldæan account of the Deluge was read in the rooms of the Society of Biblical Archæology. Mr. Gladstone was among the audience, and joined in the discussion. One of the speakers had seized the occasion to appeal for Government assistance; but he did not receive much encouragement. There is one side of the question, said Mr. Gladstone, which must never be overlooked: "It has been the distinction and pride of this country to do very many things by individual effort which in other countries would only be effected by what Sir Robert Peel used to call 'the vulgar expedient of applying to the Consolidated Fund,' or whatever in those other countries corresponds to that well-known institution." Then Mr. Gladstone turned to archæology, and gave some interesting details about one of his favourite diversions:—

"The life that I lead at present, and a certain period of my life, has been extremely barren of results in matters such as those with which you are conversant to-night. But

* See, for a brilliant appreciation of this and other measures of Mr. Gladstone's Government, a pamphlet by the present Warden of Merton College, Oxford, written in 1874 and entitled "Five Years of Liberal Policy and Conservative Opposition." Mr. Brodrick, referring to the electoral tactics pursued by those who should have known better in the electoral campaign of 1874, asked indignantly: "Is it consistent with reason or justice, or the very rudiments of political morality, or any principle but the blindest party spirit, that magistrates and ministers of religion, and country gentlemen, knowing that excessive drinking is a shame and curse of this country, acknowledging the necessity of checking it by legislative regulation, and seeing the improvement which the Licensing Act has wrought in public order and decency, should join with drunken mobs in vilifying the late Government for doing that which any other honest Government must have done, and which the Conservative Opposition had been striving to force upon it?"

† At Manchester, April 3rd.

at those periods when I was in any degree master of my own time, I have in my own way dived a little into the world of antiquity. . . . Almost everything begins for me with my old friend Homer—the friend of my youth, the friend of my middle age, the friend of my old age—from whom I hope never to part so long as I have any faculty or breath left in my body."

Mr. Gladstone went on to explain how "the course of recent discovery had tended to give a solidity—if I may use the expression—to much of the old Greek traditions which they never before possessed." But he ended with a note of characteristic caution indicative of a certain suspicious fear which he was always apt to entertain for those who dig and rummage, whether in tombs or libraries or museums. He had a latent feeling that explorations of that kind might undermine the foundations of belief or disturb some cherished article of faith :—

"I feel that above all things we must be on our guard against travelling too fast in these matters, and remember that it is a very slow and laborious process in which we are engaged. We are like children with an enormous pattern map broken into a thousand pieces, in which, through the ingenuity and learning of men like your President [Sir Henry Rawlinson] and Vice-President, and the gentlemen whom we have heard to-night, we are gradually ascertaining the proper spot for this or that particular fragment; and so, by care, adding another to the first, we go on from point to point, until at length, I believe, we shall be permitted to know a great deal more than our forefathers in respect of the early history of mankind—perhaps the most interesting and important of all the portions of the varied history of our race with reference to the weighty interests that are involved, either as regards science or religion."

A few days later Mr. Gladstone wrote to the *Spectator* about Homer. On the 21st of December he advised the students of Liverpool College to honour, as Homer honoured, freedom of thought, but at the same time with St. Paul "to hold fast that which is good." He warned them against that free thought which implied irreligion, and which "seems too often to mean thought roving and vagrant more than free, like Delos drifting on the seas of Greece without a root, a direction, or a home."

In the year 1873 Mr. Gladstone, encouraged by promises of Roman Catholic support, and bent upon the fulfilment of his last promise to Ireland, attacked the question of a University for Ireland.

**The Irish University Bill, 1873.**

Rising on February 13th, he submitted to the House, for the third time since the formation of his Government, "proposals respecting Irish affairs in regard to which I say little in stating that they are vital to the honour and existence of the Government; but of which I may say also that which is of greater importance, that they are vital to the prosperity and welfare of Ireland."

The Irish University Bill was an ingenious attempt to reconcile higher education with the conflicting aspirations of Romanism and Protestantism. Its promoter did not disguise the danger of Ultramontane influence; but the question was: "Do we, or do we not intend to extend to them [our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects] the full benefit of civil equality on a footing exactly the same as that on which it is granted to members of other religious persuasions?" If not, then the Government plan must be rejected. Certainly, the figures quoted were very remarkable. The total number of University students in Ireland was 1,179, and of these the Roman Catholics, who formed nearly three-quarters of the population,

supplied only about 12 per cent. In one striking passage the theory that Ireland did not care is indignantly repudiated :—

"Sir, there is a love of letters in Ireland. Ireland is not barbarous in mind. She can say justly on her own behalf—

'Nec sum adeo informis; nuper me in littore vidi;
Cum placidum ventis stabat mare.'

If only we will give her a tranquil sea in which to mirror herself, it will be in fair visage that she will return to the view."

Disraeli had fallen into the error of confounding "University" with an institution that gives a course of universal instruction; and this accounts for one passage in Mr. Gladstone's speech: "According to the old Roman law, as I am informed, *universitas* and *collegium* were as nearly as possible identical. I have not lived much in Scotland for nearly twenty years, but when I did live there it was a common thing to hear a Scotchman say to a friend, 'Have you sent your son yet to Oxford College?' The university and the college were to him exactly one and the same in idea and in fact." Mr. Gladstone proposed, so far as Dublin was concerned, to sever these words effectually one from the other, and to make the University of Dublin and Trinity College what he proved them to be in law and in history (starting from the year 1311, when John Lech, Archbishop of Dublin, got a Bull from Pope Clement V. to found a *universitas scholarum* in that city), entirely distinct and separate bodies. The new University was to be a teaching as well as an examining institution; but it was to have no chairs of Theology, Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy, or Modern History. Another and less questionable part of the scheme related to the abolition of religious tests in Trinity College, Dublin. Finally, Mr. Gladstone recommended the scheme to the patriotism of the House as one which would enable the sister island to raise herself to a height of culture worthy of the genius of her people and of "those oldest and possibly best traditions of her history upon which Ireland still so fondly dwells."

**What it proposed to do.**

The speech, though not by any means a great literary effort, was wonderfully successful. Mr. Gladstone's faith in his own scheme seemed to permeate his audience and to attract universal approbation. But so soon as the Bill itself was more narrowly inspected by the eyes of sectarian jealousy, its chances of developing into an Act vanished. It was, as the *Daily News* said, "a feeble compromise"; but Irishmen, and Irishmen alone, were responsible for its destruction. The Protestants of Trinity College, the secularists of Belfast, the Roman priests and prelates, all denounced it with vigour; and even enlightened Irish Liberals and Home Rulers went, almost tearfully, into the Opposition Lobby. Two entries in Mr. Forster's diary describe the close of the debate on the second reading —the Government was beaten by three votes—and the resignation which followed :—

**Its Reception.**

"*March* 11, 1873.—Gladstone rose with the House dead against him and his Bill, and made a wonderful speech—easy, almost playful, with passages of great power and eloquence, but with a graceful play which enabled him to plant deep his daggers of satire in Horsman, Fitzmaurice and Co." *

* "His speech at the close of the debate on the Irish University Bill," says Canon

"*March* 13.—Cabinet again at twelve. Decided to resign. . . . Gladstone made us quite a touching little speech. He began playfully. This was the last of some 150 Cabinets or so, and he wished to say to his colleagues with what 'profound gratitude'—— And here he completely broke down and could say nothing, except that he could not enter on the details. . . . Tears came to my eyes, and we were all touched."

Disraeli Refuses to Take Office.

Mr. Disraeli was sent for by the Queen, but he was far too wise to pluck the ripening but not yet fully ripened fruit. "The Tory party," he said, "at the present time occupies the most satisfactory position which it has held since the days of its greatest statesmen, Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville." It had divested itself of those excrescences which were not indigenous to its native growth, but the consequence "sometimes of negligence, and sometimes perhaps in a certain degree of ignorance." He thought it would be remembered, when it entered upon a career which must be noble and was likely to be triumphant, that its leader, the trustee of its honour and interests, declined to form an ineffectual Administration. Thereupon Mr. Gladstone, reluctantly enough, resumed office.

At a banquet a few days before the division on the Irish University Bill, Mr. Gladstone had spoken the epitaph of the Government and described the causes of its approaching death:—

"I trust we have not been an idle Government. We have had an active life, and that is substantially one of the conditions of a happy life. My position as leader of the Liberal party has been spoken of. I feel how unworthy I am of that position. I feel how circumstances other than my own merits have placed me there; but I am thankful to have been there at a period of the history of this country when it has been my privilege and my duty to give the word of advance to able coadjutors and to trusty and gallant adherents; and more than once I have been permitted to see your flag, the flag which you entrusted to my hands, planted in triumph and courting the breeze on the summit of those citadels."

But these achievements had not been very popular, and had not, perhaps, served the immediate interests of the party—though they had served the permanent interests of the public:—

"It has been our fate to offend in turn many classes, whose interests, real, or more commonly supposed, it has been our duty to attack."

More Misfortunes.

The remainder of the Session of 1873 calls for little notice. The misfortunes of the Government were not yet over. In the last days of the Session a lapse of administrative discipline almost amounting to a scandal was disclosed in connection with the Post Office. Mr. Scudamore, an able but not thoroughly trustworthy official, was mainly to blame; but there was no doubt that the control of the Treasury over the Post Office had been dangerously relaxed. The telegraphic department had appropriated to the extension of the

MacColl, "converted at least one strong opponent. Lord Wemyss (then Lord Elcho) told Lord Napier and Ettrick as they walked together to the House of Commons that he intended to vote against the Bill. After the division, which put the Government in a minority of three, Lord Napier remarked to Lord Elcho, 'I wonder, Elcho, that you could have listened to that speech and voted against the man who made it.' 'I listened to the speech,' was the answer, 'and voted for the man who made it.' Lord Napier," continues the Canon, "in telling me the story, added that it was the finest speech he had ever heard." See an article on Mr. Gladstone in the *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1898.

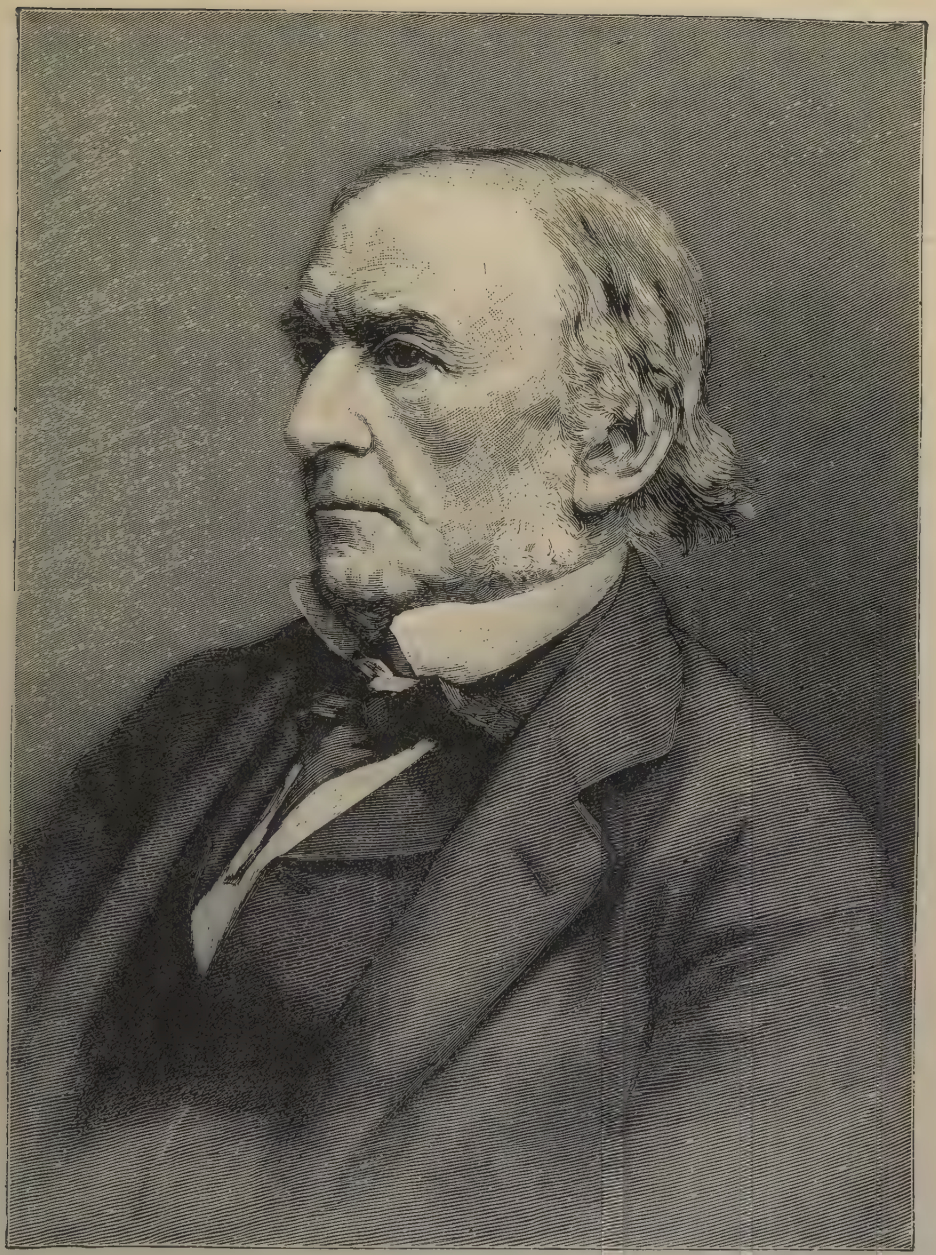

*Photo: Samuel A. Walker.*

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1873.

telegraphic system sums of money which had been received by the Post Office from ordinary revenue, and from Savings Bank depositors. Lowe, so formidable in attack, had never shown much skill in defence, and on this occasion he was at his worst. A day or two later one of his economies led to a "scene" in the House. An estimate sent in by Ayrton, the First Commissioner of Works, had been altered at the Treasury in both amount and destination without any explanation being offered. In answer to a question, Ayrton disavowed responsibility for the expenditure of the money, and in the most offensive and ostentatious manner retailed to the House what had been taking place. One interesting consequence of the incident was a remarkable speech from Mr. Gladstone on Ministerial responsibility.* Another was that the Premier reshuffled his Cabinet. Lowe went to the Home Office. Ayrton became Judge Advocate-General. Childers retired. Bright re-entered the Ministry as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Premier took upon him-

The Civil Service.

self the arduous duties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What exactly was in his mind was not at first known. It was said, and possibly, in ill-informed quarters, even thought, that these changes were made solely to propitiate the permanent Civil Service, which was represented as being in a state of scarcely disguised mutiny. Now it is perfectly true that the heads of the Civil Service did not like open competition. Nor is a policy of economy popular at the best of times in spending departments. Nevertheless, Childers and Ayrton might easily have carried out their economies without provoking enmity if they had had a little more tact and knowledge of the world. But these qualities were unfortunately conspicuously absent. With these exceptions, however, there was little or none of that bitter hostility to the Administration which a perusal of the pages of the *Edinburgh Review* or of the public and private letters of the Whigs of the period might lead one to assume. Mr. Gladstone never was personally unpopular in the Civil Service. On the contrary, his public spirit, industry, and administrative ability won him the respectful admiration of many whose conservative tendencies made them hostile in large questions of policy. Moreover, he did not, like some less eminent statesmen, hold aloof from members of the Civil Service. With many of them he was on terms of intimacy and friendship. "I should unhesitatingly say," writes one whose opinion may be regarded as conclusive, "that so far from incurring the hostility of the Civil Service, no man ever commanded its confidence so much as Mr. Gladstone; for the prosaic reason, among others, that he thought much more highly of the public service than any other Minister whom I ever came across."

There was, undoubtedly, another and a very much more important reason for Mr. Gladstone's return to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. He knew that the revenue returns were very favourable, and he was turning over in his mind the possibility of a striking and dramatic achievement in the Budget of the coming spring. In the autumn he began to make detailed and searching inquiries into receipts and expenditure; and it was soon shrewdly suspected by one or two of his most trusted subordinates that the total abolition of the income-tax

* July 30th, 1873, Hansard. The speech seems to have escaped the notice of Constitutional lawyers.

was in contemplation. As the figures became more and more favourable Mr. Gladstone's excitement grew. Evidently the surplus would be a huge one; for at that time the revenue was advancing by leaps and bounds. So far his idea had been to dissolve after the Budget. In the winter, however, he suddenly changed his mind and determined to proclaim his intention of abolishing the income-tax and then dissolve Parliament.

Contemplating the Abolition of the Income-tax.

It is easy to point out after the event that the change of policy was a mistake. An expedition to Ashantee had still to await a successful ending. A sudden dissolution gave the advantage to the party which was better prepared; and the Conservatives had been patiently organising themselves for a long time past. But Mr. Gladstone's proud spirit could not endure to remain in office on sufferance. Accordingly, he dissolved Parliament on the ground that the authority of the Ministry had "sunk below the point necessary for the due defence and prosecution of public interests," and ended up an income-tax policy of twenty years' standing by making its abolition the subject of an appeal to the country.

Dissolving Parliament, 1874.

Another consideration may well have influenced him. In the preceding August he had, as we have seen, assumed the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer in conjunction with that which he already held of First Lord of the Treasury, without duly considering at the time whether by so doing he would vacate his seat at Greenwich, and so provoke a bye-election at which he might very probably be defeated. The question depended upon two statutes, one belonging to the reign of Queen Anne, the other to the year 1867. Mr. Gladstone assumed that a reservation in the later statute relieved him from the necessity of vacating his seat. But the Law Officers of the Crown thought otherwise, and the matter "was at least sufficiently grave to require deliberate consideration from the House of Commons; and there was the risk of formidable penalties if he sat and voted in the House when in point of law the seat was vacant."* Mr. Gladstone became sensible of the difficulty either of taking his seat in the usual manner at the opening of the Session, or of letting the Address at so momentous a crisis be disposed of in his absence. "A dissolution," according to the summing up of Lord Selborne, "was the only escape, and I have never doubted that this was the determining cause of the dissolution of January, 1874."

Certainly in the absence of some strong compulsion Mr. Gladstone's tactics would appear extraordinary. With a large majority in the House of Commons and a splendid surplus to dispose of, he undoubtedly might have carried a series of important and brilliant financial measures in the Session of 1874. It is always fatal to dissolve Parliament on an ebb tide. But Mr. Gladstone disregarded the lessons of experience and the warning of the bye elections, and plunged recklessly into one of those "unseasonable, unskilful and precipitate dissolutions of Parliament" upon which Lord Clarendon animadverts in the commencement of his "History of the Rebellion," as the most probable source of "these waters of bitterness we now taste."

F. W. HIRST.

* Personal and Political Memorials of Roundell Palmer, Earl of Selborne.

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# CHAPTER XIV.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S HOME LIFE.

Effects of a Happy Home Life—A Double *Ménage*—Mr. Gladstone's Arrangement of his Library—St. Deiniol's—In the "Temple of Peace"—Succession of the Hawarden Estate—Dwelling among their own People—Beginning the Day—Breakfast—The Morning's Work—Recreation—The Beauties of Hawarden—Mr. Gladstone as a Landscape Gardener—An Adventure in the Park—Tree-Felling—Afternoon Tea—Dinner—The Craving for Retirement—Politics not the First of His Interests—Sir Andrew Clark's One Mistake—Mr. Gladstone's Talk—His "Simplicity"—His Defective Sense of Proportion—His Humour—His Story-telling Faculty—Elasticity of his Temperament—His Self-order and Discipline—His Sunday Observance—His Rules of Life—How he Bore Private Calamity—Enumeration of his Family.

WE are indebted to a relative of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone for the following description of the statesman's life at home:—

It is doubtless true of many men who have been called to fill important posts, and the main part of whose lives has been spent in the full glare of publicity, that their private lives have been simple, tranquil, bright with family love, and with the many delights of home and friendship.

But there can be few indeed among prominent men of whom this could be so truly said as of Mr. Gladstone. And to all who loved and revered him this is a matter for rejoicing. Had his home life been less happy, we may be very certain that his public life would have been far less vigorous, far less strenuous, far less inspired; his powers of work would have been reduced by half; his buoyancy, so indomitable under defeat, would have given way; his days would have been shortened and his achievements curtailed. For it must be remembered that Mr. Gladstone was not cast in the same mould as are most men who live into their ninth decade. He was not of a placid, phlegmatic, easy-going temperament, of the sort that takes life easily, and can bear troubles, especially the troubles of others, with equanimity. The French formula for longevity—"Mauvais cœur, bon estomac"—did not apply to him. Indeed, in his case it was rather reversed; for his digestion, though admirably kept in order by gastronomic precautions, was not strong by nature, while his heart was intensely alive to the agonies and miseries of the world.

**Effects of a Happy Home Life.**

With his naturally "vulnerable temper," to use his own expression, and his sensitive, highly strung nature, he would, one may rest assured, have suffered more than another in body, mind, and soul amid uncongenial or depressing surroundings.

It was by his happy marriage, in 1839, with the elder sister of Sir Stephen Glynne, that Mr. Gladstone became connected with Hawarden. His first visit to the Castle, as another writer has noted, was in the year 1835, when he was invited there by Sir Stephen Glynne, whom he had known at Oxford. As long as his father, Sir John Gladstone,

survived, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone spent a considerable part of their time at Fasque, Sir John's country seat in the county of Kincardine; but on his death, early in the fifties, Hawarden became exclusively their country home.

Mr. Gladstone was deeply attached to Hawarden—more so rather than less because of the somewhat peculiar position he occupied there. Owing to heavy financial losses that befell the property within a few years of his marriage, it became necessary, in order to keep the estate together, for Mr. Gladstone to make large pecuniary sacrifices. He and his wife at this period undertook the expenses of the household; and Sir Stephen Glynne, the head of the family, who was unmarried, resided with them.

A Double Ménage.

Most happily and harmoniously did this unusual double *ménage* work. Sir Stephen, the gentlest and most courteous of men, respected and beloved by a wide circle of friends, and Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Flint for many years, was, of course, master of the house, while Mrs. Gladstone was its mistress; and Mr. Gladstone never at any time occupied any other position than that of honoured guest. In one part of the house, it is true, he reigned supreme—that is, in his own study. For many years he occupied a large room on the first floor, with a northern aspect; but in the year 1864 an addition was made to the Castle, a spacious library with bedrooms above being built at the north-west angle of the house. This library, like its predecessor, was never known in the family by any other designation than that of the "Temple of Peace." It was thus distinguished from the original library—the large and cheerful room, looking south and west, with its French window leading into the garden by a flight of steps (a favourite spot for photographic groups). This room, which is lined with bookshelves on two of its walls, has always been the principal "living-room" of the castle. Mr. Gladstone's own books have never intruded themselves into the Glynne Library, but filled his own room to a degree best expressed in the words of Scripture: "pressed down, shaken together, and running over"—overflowing the "Temple of Peace," in fact, in spite of most ingenious economising of space, into the adjoining lobby, which hence acquired the name of the "Chapel of Ease."

True to one of his most marked characteristics, Mr. Gladstone, having to solve the problem of how to house in a limited space a collection of books increasing at an average rate of 1,000 volumes a year, devoted to the question as thorough and concentrated an attention as he did to every matter he took in hand, from the preparation of a Budget and the drawing-up of an Irish Land Bill to the hanging of a picture or the utilising of the blank squares of a sheet of postage stamps. By the use of shallow immovable shelves graduated in size, of projecting buttresses capable of containing books on three of their sides (not to mention various receptacles on the floor of the room), he contrived to accommodate something like 50,000 volumes in the "Temple of Peace" and the "Chapel of Ease." Mr. Gladstone made this book-case arrangement the theme of an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, and in his matchless fashion illuminated with interest a subject which, in most hands, would have been a mere matter of joinery.

Mr. Gladstone's Arrangement of his Library.

The transference of this great collection of books to St. Deiniol's Library—at which, assisted by his daughter Helen, he worked with the utmost energy, placing in the new library-shelves almost every book

*Photo: Cassell and Co., Lim.*

EXTERIOR OF ST. DEINIOL'S LIBRARY, HAWARDEN.

with his own hand — did, of course, shear the "Temple of Peace" of much of it old glories. But none could grudge this who knew how long it had been his desire to found this library and present it to Wales for the use of her students, and especially of her clergy. He used to hope it would be a specially valuable possession to the Church in Wales in the event of Disestablishment befalling her. And nothing could have caused him more gratification than to know that a permanent building to contain the library would be raised as one of the nation's memorials of him.

**Removal of the Books to St. Deiniol's.**

But to return to the "Temple of Peace." Well was its name deserved. Here everyone was welcome, provided he observed the rule of silence; and no more peaceful shrine for reading or writing could be imagined. The shelves were open to all on condition of an entry being made, in a book kept for the purpose, of each volume taken out, with name of borrower and date of borrowing and return. Here would Mr. Gladstone be seen, entirely oblivious of anyone's presence, either seated in his arm-chair by the fire, or of late years extended on a narrow sofa, buried in a book; or writing page after page of some political despatch, without break or pause; or in the window by the door, at another table, consecrated to Homer or to theology, engaged with equal strenuousness and far more delight on one or other of those great themes. Here one was always

**In the "Temple of Peace."**

POPLAR



safe from the "busy hum" of family or village affairs; and whatever plans or discussions or anxieties were in agitation without, here was the reign of peace.

We will pause for a moment to explain briefly the family arrangements already alluded to. By a sad fatality, both Sir Stephen Glynne and his brother, the much respected rector of Hawarden, died suddenly and unexpectedly within two years of each other, the latter in 1872, in his sixty-second year, the former in 1874, at the age of sixty-seven. The baronetcy, therefore, became extinct. Under Sir Stephen's will, the Hawarden estates were to pass, failing male heirs of himself or his brother, first to the eldest son of his elder sister, Mrs. Gladstone, failing whom, to the eldest son of his younger sister, Lady Lyttelton.

Accordingly, on the death of Sir Stephen, the property, after due provision made for the Rev. Henry Glynne's two surviving daughters, passed into the hands of Mr. W. H. Gladstone, as the eldest son of Mrs. Gladstone. Shortly before, Mr. Gladstone had purchased adjoining estates, consisting of about two thousand acres, which he lost no time in transferring to his son. The whole of these arrangements were made subject to the stipulation that Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone were to have the use of Hawarden Castle for the rest of their lives. Thus, in her present most pathetic double bereavement, reft of her eldest son and of her

**Succession of the Hawarden Estate.**

*Photo: R. Banks, Manchester.*

INTERIOR OF ST. DEINIOL'S LIBRARY, HAWARDEN.

husband, Mrs. Gladstone continues to occupy as her own home the beloved Castle and its grounds; while her young grandson, whose unfolding promise brought much thankful joy to Mr. Gladstone's last years, has succeeded to the property.

MASTER WILLIAM GLYNNE GLADSTONE
(*Owner of the Hawarden Estate*).

After the death of the Rev. Henry Glynne, Sir Stephen presented the living to Mr. Gladstone's second son, then a hard-worked curate in the parish of St. Mary's, Lambeth. Albert Lyttelton, the Rev. Stephen Gladstone's first cousin and contemporary, was for several years one of his curates. Eventually Mr. Gladstone's eldest son settled with his wife and children in a new house which he built for himself in the upper part of the village, while Miss Glynne, the daughter of the late rector, has, since her father's death, lived in a *cottage ornée*, charmingly placed in the park within ten minutes' walk of the Castle. Thus Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone may be said, indeed, to have "dwelt among" their "own people." Ever, too, have the hospitable doors of the Castle been opened wide to friends and kindred: and who among them all can ever forget those happy visits?—whether paid during the height of some political excitement, or during periods free from the cares of public life, in the spring or in the late summer, or (as in long-past days) on the occasion of a Christmas or New Year's ball.

**Dwelling among their own People.**

As at no time did Mr. Gladstone occupy the position of head of the house, his own daily habits were little affected by the presence even of a houseful of company. For fifty years and more it was his invariable practice to attend Matins at the parish church every morning at 8.30 a.m., regardless of weather—and this though he once confessed that throughout his life getting up in the morning was a specially disagreeable effort to him.

**Beginning the Day.**

Of late years he would drop in on his way at the rectory to drink a cup of tea. At last, when both were well over eighty, the early morning walk became too severe a tax upon the strength of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, and, though neither would have consented to drive for his or her own sake, the pony-carriage was submitted to by each for the sake of the other. And finally, they were persuaded to give up the nearly life-long practice, and to attend instead a five o'clock Evensong three times a week. This was continued until Mr. Gladstone's last illness had begun.

After church followed the family breakfast, often enlivened by brilliant talk. If interesting topics were started the party would linger long round the breakfast table. Perhaps some "contentious matter" would come to the front, and if the opposing party had the courage of

his opinions and would boldly stand up to the veteran of a hundred fights, there would be all the dexterous sword-play, the rapid cut-and-thrust, the weighty argument, the incisive repartee, of a miniature House of Commons debate; but all in de- Breakfast. lightful good humour. Indeed, while granting that Mr. Gladstone may have been born with a hot temper, all who knew him at home will testify to his perfect control over it. Indignant he might be, full of wrath at anything that appeared to him base, cruel, or false—in times of strain, sensitive, sometimes stern: always desperately in earnest, impetuous in speech—nay, perhaps he might have given as the weakness for which he had most sympathy (as was once done by another man of somewhat the same temper) "strong language." But who in his home life ever knew him fail in courtesy, in self-control? Who ever heard him speak sharply to a servant or a woman, or give way to irritability or fretfulness? His servants loved and honoured him, and would all testify to his habitual consideration and kindness.

After breakfast the "Temple of Peace" claimed him; and he seldom or never went out before luncheon. As he advanced in years, his desire to utilise every moment of daylight for reading and writing grew upon him; and many were the expedients resorted The Morning's Work. to by Mrs. Gladstone to inveigle him out of doors before the best of the day was over. When at length he sallied forth, fortunate were his companions. To begin with, few woods and parks, even of more imposing extent, can beat Hawarden Park and the Boobery* Wood for beauty. There is all the charm of unexpectedness in the sudden rising of the hilly country Recreation. from the monotonous flat over which the traveller drives from Chester. Very soon after the English border is crossed, Wales asserts herself as a land of romantic hill and valley. From the library window of the Castle the eye travels up a lovely sweep of lawn adorned with great trees, nearly every one of The Beauties of Hawarden. which is perfect in its kind. This slope is crowned by the "Old Castle," the remains of a stronghold dating from the days of ancient Britain, and held successively by Britons, Saxons, and Normans.

The walk, of about three-quarters of a mile, from the Castle to the church, beginning with an ascent to the top of the "Broad Walk" in the garden, is singularly picturesque. Emerging from the garden by a door in the wall, the pedestrian finds himself on a pathway commanding a varied and beautiful view over the park. The ground falls rapidly away to the carriage drive below, and on the opposite sides the slopes are covered with bracken, while magnificent trees, single and in groups, form the chief glory of the scene. The abrupt eminence, crowned by the "Old Castle," rises on your left as you pass through the gate; and the line of the ancient moat can be clearly seen. This beautiful path, sometimes dubbed the "Weg Walk," was designed by Mr. Gladstone himself, as is to be seen from the inscription over the door: "W.E.G., 1853." †

*A corruption of Bilberry.

† By an unfortunate error of the stone-cutter the date is incorrectly given; it should have been 1852.

Nor is the "Weg Walk" Mr. Gladstone's only title to fame as a landscape gardener. With the assistance of his eldest son, who still more excelled in all such country pursuits, he planned out the many charming walks which penetrate the park in all directions, revealing its manifold beauties, and giving endless variety to walkers.

Mr. Gladstone as a Landscape Gardener.

Recollections crowd upon the mind of happy afternoons when Mr. Gladstone would at length tear himself from his books and do the honours of the "Lancashire Walks," so called because they were planned in the first place to give employment to the Lancashire operatives, thrown out of work in the terrible times of the Cotton Famine during the American Civil War. In the intervals of talk upon all sorts of topics he would prove himself the best of guides, able as he was to tell the tale of all the improvements, and to point out every notable tree. Mr. Gladstone's usual walking habits were much broken into when he embarked on the transfer of his books to St. Deiniol's Library, a work that, while it lasted, may almost be said to have absorbed his energies.

At the bottom of the park, near Broughton Brook, is the scene of his famous encounter with the furious cow, supposed by some malicious persons to be more or less legendary, but which is undeniably an historical fact. The cow had strayed into the park, and had been enraged by being pursued hither and thither by her owners. Mr. Gladstone, meeting her on the walk, hit at her with his stick to drive her off; upon which the cow promptly charged him and knocked him down. Mr. Gladstone, aware that if he got up she would infallibly charge him again, had no alternative but to drag himself backward until he reached the shelter of a tree, where he had to remain till the cow grew tired of waiting and made off. Mr. Gladstone was somewhat bruised and stiff, and had to rest himself two or three times on his walk home, but otherwise was in no way the worse for his adventure. On his return he said nothing about it for some time, and many wild versions of the story got abroad.

An Adventure in the Park.

In all matters of wood-craft, as is well known, Mr. Gladstone was keenly interested. A lady, paying her first visit to Hawarden, and having heard much of his prowess as a tree-feller, expressed her surprise at finding the place rather overstocked than understocked with timber. It was, in fact, paradoxical as it may sound, as a lover of trees that he was a tree-feller. He loved every beautiful tree; but he was severe upon those that were in process of decay. But for Mrs. Gladstone, he would have doomed to destruction a certain tree on the lawn simply because it was not worthy of its glorious neighbours. Mrs. Gladstone, however, successfully championed, in this case as in many another, the cause of the less favoured, and the tree in question still holds its place among the rest.

Tree-Felling.

To watch Mr. Gladstone and his eldest son cutting down a big tree was a sight worth remembering. Both were excellent wielders of the axe, though Mr. W. H. Gladstone perhaps bore off the highest honours for clean, smooth cutting. But Mr. Gladstone went at his work as if his very livelihood depended upon it; and it is related of him that on one of his rare wakeful nights, what banished sleep was not the cares of State, but the fact that the rising of the wind disturbed him with

*Photos: Cassell and Co., Lim.*

VIEWS IN HAWARDEN PARK.

the fear that a tree which he had had to leave half cut through would be blown over in the wrong direction.

**Afternoon Tea.**

After the walk would come the delightful gathering round the five o'clock tea-table; an hour when new arrivals were generally due. Everyone was put at their ease at once; none could stay at the Castle without feeling themselves welcomed by hostess and host, sons and daughters, as almost part and parcel of the family.

**Dinner.**

Tea-time was only too soon cut short by the demands of the post. Dinner was on the table punctually at eight, and nobody was waited for, unless it was some distinguished stranger. As soon as three had assembled, Mr. Gladstone would cry "Quorum! Quorum!" and march the little party in. After dinner, his remaining throughout the evening in the library was rare; he would take the freedom of the guest instead of properly playing the part of the host, and would disappear into the "Temple of Peace" in half an hour or so; and it was the business of his friends to start topics which might entice him to spend the rest of the evening among them. Backgammon would often have this effect.

**The Craving for Retirement.**

As, although in unbroken health, the weight of years began to make itself felt, his desire to get quit of public duties, and as he often expressed it, "not to end his days in contention," grew stronger and stronger. Once, during his last term of office, while walking with a relative, something was said to him of the desirability of his writing some notable biography. He replied that while engaged in politics it was impossible, and stopping short he said with strong emphasis, "You know I would get out of it to-morrow if I could."

**Politics not the First of his Interests.**

This leads us to note his keen interest in many things outside politics. Those who pictured his time when out of office as a time of inaction, little knew the man. All his life through he was a worker; and political work was emphatically not what he loved best. Indeed for politics, *quâ* politics, he had by no means a passion. As is well known, the desire of his heart in early youth was to take Holy Orders, and it was only at considerable sacrifice of personal feeling that he entered upon a Parliamentary career.

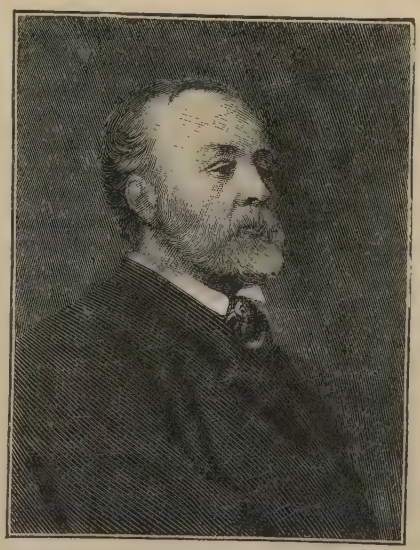
But his was a nature of which the guiding principle was "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," and that, for no lower motive than Duty to be done "as ever in [the] Great Task-master's eye." Accordingly he took up politics with the vigorous earnestness that always distinguished him; though he only *loved* the work when he was putting through a great cause. And never did he leave office, even after defeats that cut him to the heart, without finding intense refreshment and joy in his home life, with its varied interests.

**Sir Andrew Clark's One Mistake**

"The beloved physician," Sir Andrew Clark, who for so many years enjoyed and deserved Mr. Gladstone's confidence, made but one mistake in his view of his constitution, but it was a great one. He gave it as his opinion that when Mr. Gladstone retired altogether from public life he would die from want of the long-accustomed stimulus of political work. Mr. Gladstone's

own family knew better; and Sir Andrew, had his valuable life been spared to see the issue, would have been the first to acknowledge his error.

How could Mr. Gladstone miss the stimulus of political life when there were trees to cut down, Homer to interpret, Butler to edit, old and new books to read, religious subjects to treat, St. Deiniol's Library to create and arrange, children and grandchildren to care for, friends to converse with, Hawarden interests to promote? As soon as he was free from office, he took up some literary work or other with enthusiastic diligence.



SIR ANDREW CLARK.
(*From the Portrait by G. F. Watts, R.A.*)

Friends who knew him intimately, both in public and in private, can testify that his conversation was even more brilliant, more diversified, more delightful to old and young, when he was in retirement than when he was in the thick of great affairs. At such times, his friends would be well aware that the best way to "draw" him would be to avoid current politics altogether. It was necessary to be prompt, for there was always the danger of his taking advantage of the first pause in conversation to slip off to the "Temple of Peace," where pen or book awaited him. Yet if one had the good fortune to start some fruitful topic, how great was one's reward!

**Mr. Gladstone's Talk.**

And how wide was the field of his interests and of his knowledge! History—ancient, modern, English or foreign, ecclesiastical or secular—literature in its widest sense, theology (upon which, as they themselves would readily allow, he towered above most of the bishops on the bench), biography, trade, commerce—in all these matters he was at home, and to each and all he would impart vivid charm, partly by dint of his brilliant powers of expression, partly by his own keen interest in things.

His entire absence of self-consciousness, and the manner in which he always took for granted the capacity and sympathy of everyone present, gave a special charm to his conversation. It might be a little confusing to a young lady in her teens to be seriously asked on what she founded the opinion she had innocently brought forward with no very orderly array of reasons to back it, or to the cynical man of the world to find himself fixed by the eagle eye, and expected to rise to the height of some great religious or ecclesiastical argument. But it was fascinating all the same; and though the scene may have been merely the family tea-table, with two or three visitors thrown in, such talk had the effect—and this was one of Mr. Gladstone's supreme gifts—of raising people of all sorts and kinds to his own level of moral sincerity.

It must not be supposed, however, that in his home circle, or any other, he was always at high flights in his conversation. His intellect was doubtless great, and in some respects subtle; but there was to his nature what has often been noticed in the greatest men when they have been noble in character as well as great—a child-like side. In him there was much that was in the best sense simple; and it was the simplicity that comes of a pure heart. He delighted in the sayings and doings of children, in old jokes, in old school and college and parliamentary reminiscences—playful, minute, and astoundingly accurate, even when they went back sixty or seventy years.

**His "Simplicity."**

We have already spoken of his way of putting his whole mind into whatever he was about, whether small or great. It is not easy to judge exactly between the good and the harm thence resulting. The harm could be detected in a certain defective sense of proportion which was characteristic of him, and which often caused the matter immediately before him to bulk too large in his eye. "He has got his blinkers on," was an expression used of him with much force on such occasions. Side issues, risks, the feelings of friends, the prejudices of the day, the lions in the path—all would be either ignored, or only recognised to be thrust aside, when he had some great end immediately in view; and thus he has been looked upon by many as a sort of Juggernaut, who, to attain his end, would drive remorselessly over the bodies of men.

**A Defective Sense of Proportion.**

And the accusation is so far true that, when possessed by a great conviction, he was not to be stopped by any earthly considerations whatever. But it should not be forgotten that his Juggernaut-car would roll over his own personal interests as relentlessly as over those of others, and it is this strong characteristic of his which makes those who knew him best deny that there was in him any "love of power" for its own sake. It was in every case *the cause* that he loved; and power only as a means of winning the battle.

Upon the knotty point of Mr. Gladstone's sense of humour there has been great difference of opinion, some asserting that he had none, others that he had a great deal. The fact is that his sense of humour, as another contributor to these pages has noted, was an uncertain quantity; and members of his own family have been known to say that it was impossible to tell beforehand what would amuse him. The lack already alluded to, of a sense of proportion, has doubtless to be taken into account. Thus, if a jest which otherwise might have greatly amused him, happened to involve, however incidentally, some inaccuracy of statement, he would fix his whole mind on this unlucky inaccuracy and fail altogether to seize the point of the joke. Again, a pleasantry directed against himself seldom amused him, and this, not for the ordinary reason that it wounded his *amour propre* or affronted him. He was not thin-skinned in that sense, for he was a man of deep religious humility, and quite free from pre-occupation with self. But such a jest was apt to make him unhappy, and he would cast about to think what he had done to deserve it, to the great confusion of face of the hapless relator, who had hoped to make him laugh. It must also be allowed that he

**His Humour.**

was often inordinately amused by rather poor fun—such as children's *bons mots* and the like.

On the other hand, no one who heard him tell anecdotes could for a moment doubt his possessing a faculty as well as a sense of humour. In choice of words, in dramatic play of voice and feature, in intense appreciation of the point, in rising to the climax, he excelled. In conversation he never was tedious, never heavy in hand. Many a great speech can be cited, many a thrust in debate, marked by true wit—the wit of repartee, of antithesis, of irony, of sense of bathos. Although as a judge of character he was not strong, yet when the lapse of time had, as it were, adjusted his focus, he could most incisively sketch off the characters and peculiarities of old colleagues or old foes—as when he said of one of these: "In attack he was admirable; but in defence as helpless as *a beetle on its back.*"

His Story-telling Faculty.

A very striking quality in him was his elasticity. The text already mentioned as one that dominated his life, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," was in him splendidly combined with that other Christian precept, "Be not anxious for the morrow" (R.V.). He worked with the eagerness and the methodical diligence of one who felt as if everything depended on himself; but when he had thus done his very best, he threw anxiety aside and never worried himself about consequences. He might be deeply grieved—that is another thing; but he did not fret or lament over his own action when he knew he had acted to the best of his judgment. The reason was plain to those who knew anything of his inner life. The overruling providence and love of God was to him no mere theory, no cold belief of the head: it was the motive-power of his whole being. Thus he could, with a quiet mind, leave consequences to God; and thus, when disappointment, defeat, and failure befell him in public life, or sorrow entered his home circle, he never lost heart or faith or hope.

Elasticity of his Temperament.

Next we would speak of his life-long habits of order and of self-discipline. Each minute had its employment, each book (of the many he read in the day) its appointed hour, each paper, letter, and document its proper place. He could send a message from Downing Street to Hawarden, if some document were wanted, with directions something to this effect: "In the right-hand corner of the front drawer of my business writing-table you will find a bunch of keys. The third key from the notch in the ring will open the lowest drawer in such a bureau. In its right-hand corner you will find a packet tied with red tape—docketed so and so; take out the fourth paper from the top, and forward it." By the orderly management of his time he effected an all-round economy

Order and Self-discipline.

*W. E. Gladstone.*

MR. GLADSTONE'S FIRST BOOK-PLATE.

of days, hours, and minutes that is probably unparalleled. This it is that explains the immense amount of reading that he got through, and also his astonishing recollection of what he had read. Coupled with his financial capacity, his habits of order also explain the excellent management of his own affairs. He once told a friend that, having for many years kept strict private accounts and balanced them to a penny, he found it unnecessary at last to keep them at all.

Among his rules must be mentioned, though it is pretty universally known, his Sunday observance, for it was a very important factor in his life. Whatever the stress of work, Sunday was always kept sacredly as the Lord's Day, no more time being given to business than was absolutely unavoidable; no secular books were read, nothing was allowed to interfere with morning and evening service. A young secretary once gave a rueful account of his arrival in Downing Street one Sunday morning after an extra hour or two in bed, hoping to find breakfast still going on, and of being immediately walked off at a brisk pace by his chief to a rather distant church for eleven o'clock service without any breakfast at all! no suspicion crossing the Grand Old Man's mind that anything else was expected. On one very exceptional occasion, when the Budget was fixed for a Monday, one of the Treasury officials said to a friend that he had seen Mr. Gladstone hard at work in the middle of the previous day. The friend replied, "Well, I will answer for it that he did not miss church," and sure enough he had been to the full service in the morning and again in the afternoon, and had only worked under pressure of sheer necessity for two and a half hours between the services. Apart from the religious aspect of Sunday observance, the boon it must be to a man working as Mr. Gladstone worked is incalculable. He himself attributed to his Sundays much of his physical health and elasticity.

Sunday Observance.

But to this many other causes contributed. He was a living proof of the amount of mental labour that may be got through, not only without harm, but with absolute benefit to health, by dint of certain simple rules of life.

1. *Diet.*—He kept his sensitive digestion in order by restricting himself to plain, well-cooked food, and never eating what disagreed with him. Whatever might be the pressure of business in the height of the Session, he was hardly ever known to dine at the House. Mrs. Gladstone, with genius all her own, always contrived that at whatever time between eight and nine he might turn up, his dinner should be ready for him, hot and dressed to a turn. Doubtless the getting away from the (morally and physically) heated atmosphere of the House and the change of thought and scene were distinctly beneficial.

His Rules of Life.

2. *Wine.*—Mr. Gladstone was a "moderate drinker" all his life. He often spoke of the inordinate quantity of wine that people were expected to drink in his young days, especially at election times, and the great difficulty there was in eluding the bumpers. As in other matters of diet, he lived by rule in what he drank, and once said that as he grew older he diminished the quantity. The subject of wine interested him; he was fond of trying different varieties, and had a great liking for port. Often expectant guests—especially ladies—looking forward

to a delightful conversation at dinner, would be sadly disappointed by finding Mr. Gladstone launched upon the topic of wine, which even he could hardly raise to sublime heights. It has been whispered that his taste in wine was not above criticism, but upon this point it would be rash to express an opinion.*

3. *Sleep.*—Mr. Gladstone believed in the possibility of forming good habits of sleep at night. He secured this inestimable boon by keeping some book at his bedside, neither too light nor too heavy, and treating of something as far removed as possible from the subjects occupying his mind. On returning from the House in the small hours, tired and excited, he would have a cup of tea, and then resort to this reading remedy, which was hardly ever known to fail if he was in his usual health. Until his last term of office, when he had to husband his strength more than he had done before, he was, as a rule, downstairs by a quarter past nine to read family prayers.

4. *Exercise.*—When a young man at school and college, he took no great pleasure in athletics; but, as all the world knows, he was an enthusiastic pedestrian, and a very fast walker until the last few years of his life. Although he never hunted he was fond of riding, but gave it up after a rather severe fall from "Firefly" (a favourite and fiery chestnut mare) in Rotten Row many years ago. Shooting he also relinquished after the gun accident which cost him the forefinger of his left hand in 1842. Tree-cutting he did not take to much before middle life.

These rules and habits doubtless were important factors in his well-being; but Mr. Gladstone's life-long self-discipline, religious, moral, and intellectual, was the most important factor of all. His great brain, as has been well said, appears to have been divided off into compartments; he could turn the key upon one set of subjects, and open the door to another, almost at will. Thus he never wore himself out by hammering all day long on one string, but proved in his own case the great truth that in diversity of occupation and change of thought is the truest rest to the mind. When he took a holiday, he took it with all his might; but inaction was no refreshment to him.†

The same self-discipline came to his rescue in times of private as of public calamity. He felt these things keenly, but at the call of duty he was always able to shut them away. Once, while driving down to the House with a friend, allusion was made to the death of an old and valued servant. An expression of pain passed over his face, and he said, "Ah, it is a price I have to pay for the life I have to lead—I must not allow myself to dwell on these things." How he bore Private Calamity.

Among the main causes that kept him in such splendid working order, we

* He once told the present writer that, in his younger days, he at one time kept some peculiar Greek wine on his writing-table, to sip while at his work; but that he very soon discovered that it was a most unwholesome habit and left it off. Since that time he never drank wine between meals. He said that if he had ever given in to the temptation to use alcohol as a spur to the hard-worked brain, he would have been lost.

† He did at times suffer from overwork, but it would cause internal disturbance or wakeful nights only; headache was unknown to him. As soon as any symptoms of overwork declared themselves, he was kept in bed, or taken abroad, and would invariably and rapidly recover.

cannot pass over the loving, vigilant care of his wife and children. From the moment of her marriage, Mrs. Gladstone realised to the full the part she had to play. Hers it has been, not so much to *lighten* his cares, as actually to remove from his path *all* cares that she could take upon herself. And from their early years upwards his children also were to him fellow-helpers, sources of joy and comfort. Thus we end as we began, with the family happiness that had so much to do, both directly and indirectly, with his long and glorious career.

What he owed to his Wife and Children.

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Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone's family consisted of four sons and four daughters, of whom they had to mourn the loss of two—a little daughter who died in her fifth year, in 1850, and their eldest son, taken from them in 1891, at the age of fifty-one. We subjoin the names of the eight children:—

1. William Henry, born June 3rd, 1840. Married in 1875 Gertrude, daughter of the twelfth Baron Blantyre. Died July 4th, 1891.
2. Agnes, born October 18th, 1842. Married December 27th, 1873, Edward Wickham, Head Master of Wellington College, and now Dean of Lincoln.
3. Stephen Edward, born April 4th, 1844. Married January, 1885, Annie, daughter of Mr. C. B. Wilson, surgeon, of Liverpool.
4. Catherine Jessy, born in 1845, died in 1850.
5. Mary, born November 21st, 1847. Married February, 1886, Rev. Harry Drew, now Vicar of Buckley, Flintshire.
6. Helen, born August 28th, 1849. Late Vice-Principal of North Hall, Newnham College, Cambridge.
7. Henry Neville, born April 2nd, 1852. Married January, 1890, Maud, daughter of Lord Rendel.
8. Herbert John, born January 7th, 1854.

William Henry Gladstone sat successively in the House of Commons as a Liberal for Chester, Whitby, and East Worcestershire; and for a short time was a Lord of the Treasury. For a political life, however, he had little predilection, and he did not stand again for Parliament after the dissolution in 1885. His tastes lay in other directions. He was an elegant classical scholar, a master of English style, and an excellent musician, leaving behind him many sacred compositions. Sir Walter Parratt wrote of him: "His taste for Church music seemed . . . absolutely unerring and his knowledge of the best music in all schools minute. . . . Several of his chants are in our selections. . . . He compiled a hymn-book. It is the only one I know in which there are no bad tunes."

In his younger days he was a noted football and fives player, and later on a devoted and fearless Alpine climber.

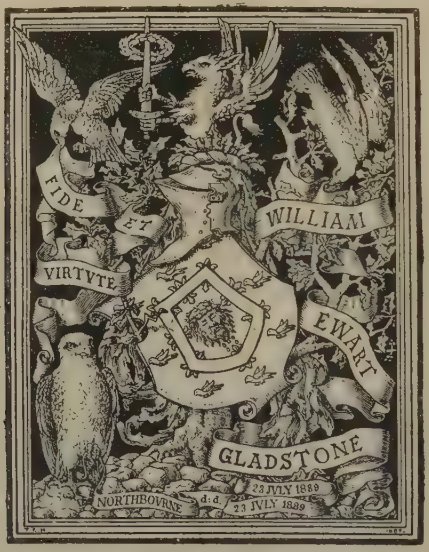
Stephen Edward Gladstone, after some years spent as a busy London curate, has been Rector of Hawarden since 1872, during which time much admirable parochial work has been done, notably in providing district chapels, and not less so in multiplying and strengthening the Church schools, which "hold the field" over the whole extent of this large parish.

THE GLADSTONE FAMILY IN 1884.

*Photo: Watmough Webster, Chester.*

Henry Neville Gladstone is a partner in the firm of Gellander, Ogilvy, and Co., and is a thorough man of business.

Herbert John Gladstone was suddenly launched into public life, from the peaceful haunts of Keble College, where he was History Lecturer, in the exciting days of 1880; when, after an honourable defeat for Middlesex, he was returned for Leeds, a seat which he has held ever since. He was Under-Secretary at the Home Office in his father's last Administration, and First Commissioner of Works in Lord Rosebery's Government. Mr. Herbert Gladstone is an admirable speaker, and has made special study of Irish and social questions.




LATER BOOK-PLATE (REDUCED) OF MR. GLADSTONE, PRESENTED BY LORD NORTHBOURNE.

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# CHAPTER XV.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S FIRST RETIREMENT, 1874-1876.

Causes of the Defeat—The Situation in 1874—Mr. Gladstone Resigns Office—A Foreshadowing of Retirement—The Retirement Announced—The Public Worship Regulation Bill—The Six Resolutions—How they were Received—Mr. Gladstone's Successor—His Private Affairs—Death of Sir Stephen Glynne—Mr. Gladstone's Athletics—"Is the Church of England worth Preserving?"—An Attack on Romanism—"The Vatican Decrees"—Manning's Reply and Gladstone's Rejoinder.

MR. GLADSTONE had undoubtedly made a miscalculation in going to the country with a promise to repeal the income-tax*; and he was surprised and mortified at the result. The real reason seemed to have escaped him. To the working classes it mattered very little whether the income-tax was abolished or not. The general public had grown tired of domestic reforms, and Disraeli accurately gauged the prevailing sentiment. There was indeed a serious dearth of jingo material; but he had contrived to divert the eyes of the country from the schedules of the income-tax to the map of the world, and more particularly to the Straits of Malacca, where, he said, the Gladstonian Government had committed acts of astounding folly and ignorance—they had even compromised freedom of trade with China and Japan

From Domestic to Foreign Affairs, 1874.

> "The farmers of Aylesbury gathered to dine,
> And they ate their prime beef and they drank their old wine.
> With the wine there was beer, with the beer there was bacca.
> The liquors went round,
> And the banquet was crowned
> With some thundering news from the Straits of Malacca." †

Public opinion was beginning to undergo a vast change. In the previous decade there had been little or no national interest in foreign countries. Merchants and manufacturers, who had special knowledge of foreign markets, kept that knowledge carefully to themselves. Ordinary people did not try to conceal their ignorance. There were few political upholsterers. Even editors seldom saw, or thought they saw, across the Channel. The strength of England was respected abroad. At home there was quiet confidence, but no enthusiasm for "stricken fields." Gradually, however, the miseries of the Crimean War faded from the national memory. A new generation was growing up with a craving for excitement, and a disposition to look with favour at the flaming bills of a theatrical manager. And Disraeli certainly had a wonderful taste for political display. Gladstone had none. He applied what Pericles said of women to foreign politics. "Their great merit would be never to be heard of." ‡ His feeling is exactly represented by a description

* See p. 589.

† This squib was let off by Mr. Gladstone in one of his electioneering speeches.

‡ See a speech of Mr. Gladstone's at West Calder, November 27th, 1879.

given some years afterwards of the state of things which he regarded as ideal, and which prevailed when the Disraeli Government came into power in 1874. "They found public affairs handed over to them in good order. There was no discontent, there was no difficulty; care and economy had been exercised. All hectoring and bragging were things cautiously eschewed, but the name of the country was respected throughout the world. Great difficulties with Russia had been completely overcome by the exertions of Lord Clarendon and of Lord Granville; and though in America there was the payment witnessed of a large sum of money, yet in so doing we grounded a cordial and hearty friendship with forty million men of our own blood."

The difference between the two leaders was not confined to foreign politics, or to politics. It amounted to a complete antithesis. It comes out in their rhetoric, if we submit them for a moment to the acrid judgment of the satirist:—

> "Let Disraeli ventilate his shams,
> And gull his dupes with hollow epigrams,
> Gibe at all candour, act his studied part,
> And mock his friends and foes with equal art.
> Let Gladstone sentence upon sentence string,
> Pile words on words, on periods periods fling,
> And, highest skill which human power can reach,
> Convey no meaning in a three hours' speech." *

Before the new Parliament assembled, Mr. Gladstone, following the precedent set by Mr. Disraeli, resigned office. At the same time he wrote to his most trusted colleague, Lord Granville, as follows:—

**A Foreshadowing of Retirement, 1874.**

"MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I have issued a circular to members of Parliament of the Liberal party on the occasion of the opening of Parliamentary business. But I feel it to be necessary that, while discharging this duty, I should explain what a circular could not convey with regard to my individual position at the present time. I need not apologise for addressing these explanations to you. Independently of other reasons for so troubling you, it is enough to observe that you have very long represented the Liberal party, and have also acted on behalf of the late Government, from its commencement to its close, in the House of Lords.

"For a variety of reasons personal to myself, I could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service; and I am anxious that it should be clearly understood by those friends with whom I have acted in the direction of affairs, that at my age I must reserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time. The need of rest will prevent me from giving more than occasional attendance in the House of Commons during the present Session.

"I should be desirous, shortly before the commencement of the Session of 1875, to consider whether there would be advantage in my placing my services for a time at the disposal of the Liberal party, or whether I should then claim exemption from the duties I have hitherto discharged. If, however, there should be reasonable ground for believing that, instead of the course which I have sketched, it would be preferable, in the view of the party generally, for me to assume at once the place of an independent member, I should willingly adopt the latter alternative. But I shall retain all that desire I have hitherto felt for the welfare of the party, and if the gentlemen composing it should think fit either to choose a leader or make provision *ad interim*,

* Written by Thorold Rogers in 1872. Compare Robert Lowe's malicious saying: "Putting a question to Gladstone is like pulling the string of a shower bath."

with a view to the convenience of the present year, the person designated would, of course, command from me any assistance which he might find occasion to seek, and which it might be in my power to tender."

The announcement came as a surprise. And yet Mr. Gladstone had more than once in the sixties expressed a wish and even a determination to retire in time to devote himself to study. Bishop Wilberforce noted in his diary, May 6th, 1873: "Gladstone much talking how little real good any Premier has done after sixty: Peel; Palmerston, his work all really done before; Duke of Wellington added nothing to his reputation after." The ex-Premier had no taste for the routine of opposition to a Ministry which had been elected to do nothing, and which showed, except in one or two instances, a laudable anxiety to live down to its mission. There had been a want of discipline in the Liberal party, due mostly to the obnoxious clauses of the Education Bill.* But the prospect of the loss produced dismay so widespread that even the most brilliant mutineers found it politic to affect profound regret at the success of their own sedition. In January, 1875, the act was completed, and the resignation announced in unmistakable language. "The time has, I think, arrived," wrote Mr. Gladstone once more to Lord Granville—

**The Retirement announced, 1875.**

"when I ought to revert to the subject of the letter which I addressed to you on March 12th. Before determining whether I should offer to assume a charge which might extend over a length of time, I have reviewed, with all the care in my power, a number of considerations, both public and private, of which a portion, and these not by any means insignificant, were not in existence at the date of that letter. The result has been that I see no public advantage in my continuing to act as the leader of the Liberal party; and that, at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity. This retirement is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life. I need hardly say that my conduct in Parliament will continue to be governed by the principles on which I have heretofore acted; and, whatever arrangements may be made for the treatment of general business, and for the advantage or convenience of the Liberal party, they will have my cordial support. I should, perhaps, add that I am at present, and mean for a short time to be, engaged on a special matter, which occupies me closely."

By the resignation of its leader the Liberal party was placed in a difficulty. No great question was before the country. The Government was trying to "edify" and encourage the brewers and licensed victuallers, and to discourage the spread of education, by small instalments of special legislation in favour of the "harassed" interests. But the instalments were very small and their authors were very timid. Under these circumstances, out of the many possible candidates for the leadership of the party in the House of Commons—Mr. Bright, Mr. Forster, Mr. Robert Lowe, and Lord Hartington—the party decided, without affecting enthusiasm or creating surprise, to select the last named—while Lord Granville was recognised as the titular leader of the whole party. It is important to remember, in view of future events, that Mr. Gladstone's resignation was quite independent of Lord Hartington's

**Mr. Gladstone's Successor.**

* Mr. Gladstone intimated—too late—just before the General Election, his willingness to modify clause 25, in deference to the feeling of the Nonconformists.

succession to the leadership in the Commons. Mr. Gladstone, however, approved of the election; and a cursory inspection of Hansard for 1875 and 1876 is enough to prove that he left Lord Hartington a free hand and took very little part in Parliamentary debate. His criticism of Northcote's finance is the exception which proves the rule, for that was at the request of the party leaders.

Little doubt could be entertained as to the nature of the special matter of which Mr. Gladstone spoke in his letter of resignation. Theological controversy had always been the field in which he best loved to exercise his learning and his casuistry. Even here his mind was not strictly academical, for he was not content to exhibit his learning and dialectical skill to the small circle of unworldly pedants and critical specialists. He would have liked to persuade the House of Commons. He tried hard in the session of 1874 to win it over to his own views of the government of the Church of England. His failure was so complete and conspicuous that when he turned his attention to the government of the Church of Rome he decided to adopt the different, but—if popular interest and excitement be the criterion of success—the very much more successful methods of the pamphleteer.

**The "Special Matter."**

The Parliamentary campaign demands first consideration. Archbishop Tait had introduced into the House of Lords a "Public Worship Regulation Bill," for the purpose of introducing outward order and superficial unity into the Church. It was, in Mr. Gladstone's view, a "paltry, narrow, and unfair" attempt to "bridle a particular section of the clergy." He himself wished for something impossible—a radical reform, a real and earnest effort by members of all parties "to decide what, in the view of the conditions of society in the nineteenth century, are the principles upon which, in the public worship of God, the letter of the ecclesiastical law can be reconciled with the principles of progress in the Established Church."

**The Public Worship Regulation Bill.**

Mr. Gladstone's great speech was made when the Bill, having passed the Lords, came down to the Commons. He argued against the Bill on the ground that it was undesirable to give to bishops—for even bishops might be indiscreet—the power of rooting out local usages and customs by insisting on strict uniformity in worship where the rubrics were silent or ambiguous. Instead of the Bill Mr. Gladstone earnestly invited the House to approve the following Resolutions, which give a good view of the ideas with which he rushed into the fray:—

**The Six Resolutions.**

"1. That in proceeding to consider the provisions of the Bill for the Regulation of Public Worship, this House cannot do otherwise than take into view the lapse of more than two centuries since the enactment of the present Rubrics of the Common Prayer-Book of the Church of England; the multitude of particulars embraced in the conduct of Divine service under their provisions; the doubts occasionally attaching to their interpretation, and the number of points they are thought to leave undecided; the diversities of local custom which, under these circumstances, have long prevailed; and the unreasonableness of proscribing all varieties of opinion and usage among the many thousands of congregations of the Church distributed throughout the land.

"2. That this House is therefore reluctant to place in the hands of every single bishop, on the motion of one, or of three persons, howsoever defined, greatly increased facilities

towards procuring an absolute ruling of many points hitherto left open and reasonably allowing of diversity, and thereby tending towards the establishment of an inflexible rule of uniformity throughout the land, to the prejudice, in matters indifferent, of the liberty now practically existing.

"3. That the House willingly acknowledges the great and exemplary devotion of the clergy in general to their sacred calling, but is not on that account the less disposed to guard against the indiscretion, or thirst for power, or other faults of individuals.

"4. That the House is therefore willing to lend its best assistance to any measure recommended by adequate authority, with a view to provide more effectual securities against any neglect of or departure from strict law which may give evidence of a design to alter, without the consent of the nation, the spirit or substance of the established religion.

"5. That, in the opinion of the House, it is also to be desired that the members of the Church, having a legitimate interest in her services, should receive ample protection against precipitate and arbitrary changes of established customs by the sole will of the clergyman and against the wishes locally prevalent among them; and that such protection does not appear to be afforded by the provisions of the Bill now before the House.

"6. That the House attaches a high value to the concurrence of her Majesty's Government with the ecclesiastical authorities in the initiative of legislation affecting the Established Church."

It will easily be understood that these Resolutions did not prove at all attractive in a House of Tories, opportunistic Conservatives, timid Whigs, indifferent Liberals, and revolutionary Radicals. The last, as a writer in the *British Quarterly Review* pointed out at the time, wished not to amend but to end the Establishment. The Whigs wanted to keep a tight hold on the clergy. They believed in religion—for the people—as a useful instrument of order. They were afraid that in trying to mend, Mr. Gladstone would break the old kettle unintentionally, as he had broken it intentionally in Ireland. Mere cynics sneered at the religious fervour of the Resolutions. "The great body of the Tories looked on in silent amazement," and voted solidly with their leader when he told them that Mr. Gladstone was attacking Protestantism and trying to upset what had been ordered and settled upon the best foundations by good Queen Bess. Plainly Mr. Gladstone was isolated. "His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal"; but numbers wrought, and the Resolutions were withdrawn.

**How they were Received.**

Defeated in Parliament Mr. Gladstone, in the recess, transferred the controversy to the *Contemporary Review* * in which he contended for the proposition that where external usages have become subjects for contention, and that contention is carried to issue in the courts of law, the field should not be unnecessarily widened. Ritualism is defined as "the caricature of the beautiful." But "the marriage of the outward pervades the universe,"

**On Ritualism, 1874.**

* October, 1874, "Ritual and Ritualism." One striking passage stands apart, and is susceptible of quotation:—"True indeed it is that the fire, meant to warm, may burn us; the light, meant to guide, may blind us; the food, meant to sustain, may poison us; but fire and light and food are not only useful, they are indispensable. And so it is with that universal and perpetual instinct of human nature which exacts of us, that the form given externally to our thoughts in words and act shall be one appropriate to their substance. Applied to the circle of civilised life, this principle, which gives us ritual in religion, gives us the ceremonial of Courts, the costume of Judges, the uniform of regiments, all the language of heraldry and symbol, all the hierarchy of rank and titles, and which, descending through all classes, presents itself in the badges and the bands of Foresters' and Shepherds' Clubs and Benefit Societies."

and the undesirability of the extreme should not blind us to the necessity of the mean.

Mr. Gladstone found at the close of his arduous Premiership—and this, no doubt, strengthened him in his decision to retire—that his private affairs were in some confusion. His brother-in-law, Sir Stephen Glynne, had many remarkable qualities. His memory—even more wonderful, in Mr. Gladstone's opinion, than that of Macaulay—was charged with minute and multitudinous details of ecclesiology. He knew something about almost every parish in England, and could usually give from memory not only notes upon the bells and architecture of any parish church, but also the position and size of the parsonage, the condition of the schools, the approximate population of the parish, and even the distance of the nearest railway station. Mr. Gladstone used to say that in his first Ministry he had found Sir Stephen's knowledge very valuable in filling up Crown livings. Unfortunately, the baronet's business qualities were not equal to his memory. He got into difficulties early by trusting an untrustworthy agent. Mr. Gladstone came to the rescue, and arrangements were made which have been set out in the preceding chapter.* Sir Stephen Glynne died suddenly on the 17th June, 1874, and Mr. Gladstone, on going into his affairs, found it desirable to make certain retrenchments in his London establishment. Early in the following summer his collections of pictures and china were sold by auction. His London residence, 11, Carlton House Terrace, was disposed of about the same time.

**His Private Affairs.**

**Death of Sir Stephen Glynne.**

The need of comparative repose and the craving for, not idleness—Mr. Gladstone was never idle—but a change of work, afforded another reason for retirement from political life. He regarded a healthy body as necessary to a healthy mind, and paid almost as much attention to physical as to mental recreations. It would, therefore, be a grave omission, in recording the transitions of his intellectual activity from finance to Ritualism, or from Ritualism to Vaticanism, to forget altogether the chronicle of his physical recreations. Although not distinguished at school as either a wet or a dry bob, Mr. Gladstone eventually became, in his way, a great athlete.† He always walked fast and far, and thought walking the best of exercises. He was fond of stiff walks uphill, but never could look down a precipice. He would have disliked an Alp as much as a dangerous London crossing. He shot, as we have seen, till he shot a finger off; but he was not a very keen sportsman. "Vous aimez la chasse, mais pas beaucoup," was the comment of a famous French phrenologist. Mr. Gladstone was struck by the accuracy of the interpretation. It was, he said, the exact truth. Strangely enough, he never learned to swim. This is extraordinary, considering his splendid chest; to say nothing of his determination and perseverance. But he tried repeatedly, and failed. As a young man, he was extremely fond of the practice of turning;‡ but at the

**Mr. Gladstone's Athletics.**

* See pp. 591, 593.

† He played both cricket and football as a boy, and believed himself to have been in the second eleven at Eton.

‡ See address to the Turners' Company, February 16th, 1877.

period with which this chapter is concerned, and for many years afterwards, his favourite exercise, as all the world knows, was tree-felling. "My experience," he once said, "is that the oak, though very hard, is not a bad tree to cut, for the grain breaks off easily, and does not cling to the axe. Beech is far tougher; that and ash being the two most difficult to fell of our English trees, on account of their bending to the axe. Ash is subject to fracture in felling, and I have a splinter of ash that broke off in

Tree-felling.

"WITH HIS AXE SLUNG OVER HIS SHOULDER" (*p.* 614).

this way, in my own experience, two feet eight inches in length. The pleasantest timber to cut is Spanish chestnut, because it comes away so freely, the grain breaking easily. Yew is the most horrible to cut of all forest trees." Mr. Gladstone's interest in forestry began in 1864, when, on the death of his friend the fifth Duke of Newcastle, he found it necessary as trustee to supervise the management of a large woodland property. Instead of trusting to agents, he, with characteristic thoroughness, straightway applied himself to the theory and practice of forestry.

An interesting account of Mr. Gladstone as a woodman appeared in a Liverpool paper of 1874:—

"Two hours before a meeting at Hawarden on Tuesday evening, September 14th, Mr. Gladstone was busy felling trees. For a portion of two days he has been wielding the axe upon a large tree in a lane at the outskirts of Hawarden village, and he succeeded in bringing it to the ground late yesterday afternoon. Those who saw him say that he went to work in true woodman fashion, with his braces thrown off behind him and his shirt collar unfastened. After completing his task, he walked home with his axe slung over his shoulder, and two hours afterwards was at the meeting, looking not tired and weary, but quite refreshed."

In the *Contemporary Review* for July, 1875, Mr. Gladstone returned to theological controversy, which might now, he thought, be carried on in a more dispassionate mood: "The season is now tranquil; the furnace, no longer fed by the fuel of Parliamentary contentions among the higher authorities, has grown cool, and may be approached with safety, or at least with diminished risk." Mr. Gladstone's attitude in 1874 had won him the enthusiastic approbation of the Ritualistic section of the Church of England. He therefore took this opportunity of putting himself right in the eyes of the public:—

"Is the Church of England worth Preserving?"

"Those who opposed the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, in 1851, in some cases had for their reward (as I have reason to know) paragraphs in 'religious' newspapers, stating circumstantially that they had joined the Church of Rome. Those who questioned the Public Worship Act, in 1874, were more mildly, but as summarily, punished in being set down as Ritualists. In the heat of the period, it would have been mere folly to dispute the justice of the 'ticketing,' or classification. Perhaps it may now be allowed me to say that I do not approach this question as a partisan. Were the question one between historical Christianity and systems opposed to or divergent from it, I could not honestly profess that I did not take a side. But, as regards ritual, by which I understand the exterior form of Divine Worship, I have never, at any time of my life, been employed in promoting its extension; never engaged in any either of its general or its local controversies. In the question of attendance at this church or that, I have never been governed by the abundance or the scantiness of its ritual, which I regard purely as an instrument, aiming at an end; as one of many instruments, and not as the first among them."

The writer then proceeded, after a very learned and well-balanced discussion of the relative expediencies of the Northern and Eastward positions, to put the question which formed the title of his article, "Is the Church of England worth preserving?" He thought that Disestablishment was at hand unless legislation and litigation were stayed. There was a disposition among some "to deny the members of the National Church the commonest privileges belonging to a religious communion," and a renewal of scenes and occurrences like those of the session of 1874 would involve "not only pain, but degradation." To avoid misapprehension the writer summed up his conclusions in the following propositions:—

"1. The Church of this great nation is worth preserving, and for that end much may well be borne. 2. In the existing state of minds and of circumstances, preserved it cannot be, if we now shift its balance of doctrinal expression, be it by any alteration of the Prayer Book (either way) in contested points, or be it by treating rubrical interpretations of the matters heretofore most sharply contested on the basis of doctrinal significance. 3. The more we trust to moral forces, and the less to penal proceedings (which are to a considerable extent exclusive one of the other), the better for the Establishment, and even for the Church. 4. If litigation is to be continued, and to remain within the bounds of safety, it is highly requisite that it should be confined to the repression of such proceedings as really imply

unfaithfulness to the national religion. 5. In order that judicial decisions on ceremonial may habitually enjoy the large measure of authority, finality, and respect, which attaches in general to the sentences of our courts, it is requisite that they should have uniform regard to the rules and results of full historical investigation, and should, if possible, allow to stand over for the future matters insufficiently cleared, rather than decide them upon partial and fragmentary evidence."

Mr. Gladstone's two papers were reprinted in a revised form under the title of "The Church of England and Ritualism." The author seems to have expected that the *odium theologicum* which had raged so violently in Parliament would abate in the recess. But a paragraph in the first article had lit the flames of a far wider and more devouring conflagration. Mr. Gladstone was discussing the question whether a handful of English priests were or were not engaged in a hopeless and visionary effort to Romanise the Church and the people of England:—

**An Attack on Romanism.**

"At no time since the sanguinary reign of Mary has such a scheme been possible. But, if it had been possible in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, it would still have become impossible in the nineteenth; when Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change in faith; when she has refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused; when no one can become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and *placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another;* and when she has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history. I cannot persuade myself to feel alarm as to the final issue of her crusades in England, and this although I do not undervalue her great powers of mischief."

Many of Mr. Gladstone's Roman Catholic friends expostulated with him about this passage; and, as he afterwards admitted, he would, if he had been thinking of addressing them, have avoided "the seeming roughness" of some of his expressions. The Roman Catholics at once fastened upon the words which have been italicised, and Mr. Gladstone was called upon to withdraw the imputation which he had made upon the loyalty of a considerable section of his fellow subjects.

In the sense intended by the biographer of Cardinal Manning, Mr. Gladstone was no doubt at this time in a "dangerous mood." With English Roman Catholics of the old type, and with the section of the Roman Church represented by Dr. Döllinger and Lord Acton, he had always been on terms of intimate friendship, if not of doctrinal sympathy. But they had been repudiated by the Vatican:—

**The Vatican Decrees.**

"The decrees of the present perilous Pontificate have been passed to favour and precipitate prevailing currents of opinion in the ecclesiastical world of Rome. The growth of what is often termed amongst Protestants Mariolatry, and of belief in Papal Infallibility, was notoriously advancing, but, it seems, not fast enough to satisfy the dominant party. To aim the deadly blows of 1854 [Decree of the Immaculate Conception] and 1870 [Decree of Papal Infallibility] at the old historic, scientific, and moderate school was surely an act of violence; and with this censure the proceeding of 1870 has actually been visited by the first living theologian now within the Roman communion (Cardinal Newman)."

These words are from Mr. Gladstone's most famous pamphlet, "The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance," of which no less than 150,000 copies were sold in England alone. A complete catalogue of the different editions, translations, and rejoinders would fill several pages

It seemed to many Liberals that the author of the Repeal of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act had relapsed somehow from an attitude of absolute toleration. To this Mr. Gladstone's reply was succinct and plain: "Of what the Liberal party has accomplished by word or deed in establishing the full civil equality of Roman Catholics, I regret nothing and I recant nothing." Still, the writing of the pamphlet, which was published in November, 1874, has to be explained, and from the political standpoint the subjoined passage is full of interest and importance:—

"The great change which seems to me to have been brought about in the position of Roman Catholic Christians as citizens reached its consummation and came into full operation in July, 1870, by the proceedings or so-called decrees of the Vatican Council.

"Up to that time, opinion in the Roman Church on all matters involving civil liberty, though partially and sometimes widely intimidated, was free wherever it was resolute. During the Middle Ages heresy was often extinguished in blood, but in every Cisalpine country a principle of liberty, to a great extent, held its own, and national life refused to be put down. Nay, more, these precious and inestimable gifts had not infrequently for their champions a local prelacy and clergy. The Constitutions of Clarendon, cursed from the Papal throne, were the work of English Bishops. Stephen Langton, appointed directly, by some extraordinary stretch of power, by Innocent III. to the See of Canterbury, headed the barons of England in extorting from the Papal minion John, the worst and basest of all our sovereigns, that Magna Charta which the Pope at once visited with his anathemas. In the reign of Henry VIII., it was Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, who first wrote against the Papal domination. Tunstal was followed by Gardiner; and even the recognition of the Royal Headship was voted by the clergy not under Cranmer, but under his unsuspected predecessor Warham. Strong and domineering as was the high Papal party in those centuries, the resistance was manful. Thrice in history it seemed as if what we may call the Constitutional party in the Church was about to triumph; first, at the epoch of the Council of Constance; secondly, when the French Episcopate was in conflict with Pope Innocent XI.; thirdly, when Clement XIV. levelled with the dust the deadliest foes that mental and moral liberty have ever known. But from July, 1870, this state of things has passed away, and the death-warrant of that Constitutional party has been signed and sealed, and promulgated in form."

**Manning's Reply.**

The pamphlet drew replies from Archbishop Manning, Dr. Newman, and many others. Manning, writing in the *New York Herald*, asserted that the publication of "The Vatican Decrees" was the first event which had "overcast a friendship of forty-five years." In an appendix to a second pamphlet, entitled "Vaticanism," Mr. Gladstone described this statement as an astonishing error. After Manning's submission to the Roman Church, their friendship, he thought, could not be said never to have been overcast. Manning demanded from Mr. Gladstone an explanation: "My act in 1851," he wrote, "may have overcast your friendship for me. It did not overcast my friendship for you, as I think the last years have shown." To this Mr. Gladstone replied:—

"11, Carlton House Terrace, S.W.

"25th February, 1875.

"MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP MANNING,—As far as your question is concerned, *rem acu tetigisti*. It did, I confess, seem to me an astonishing error to state in public that a friendship had not been overcast for forty-five years until now, which your letter declares has been suspended as to all action for twelve. I doubt not you failed to perceive that your inaccurate assertion operated to sustain the insidious and painful charges made against me, that I had suppressed my opinions on the Vatican Council until I had no longer the Roman Catholic vote to gain or lose.

"I wondered, too, at your forgetting that during the forty-five years I had been charged by you with doing the work of Antichrist in regard to the Temporal Power of the Pope. In regard to the Vatican Decrees, I could do no worse.

"Of this I had written an explanation, but I could not prevail upon myself to make it the subject of public discussion; I struck it out, and substituted the present undoubtedly rather enigmatical protest.

"In this explanation I said, and now repeat, I am quite sure you did not see the effect of your statement upon my honour; also that the charge about Antichrist had given and could give no offence as between men in earnest; indeed, I believe I retorted it.

"Our differences, my dear archbishop, are, indeed, profound. We refer them, I suppose, in humble silence, to a Higher Power. We have both also, I firmly believe, cherished as well as we could the recollections of the Past. They probably restrained your pen when you lately wrote; they have certainly and greatly restrained mine. You assured me once of your prayers at all, and at the most solemn, times. I received that assurance with gratitude, and still cherish it. As and when they move upwards, there is a meeting point for those whom a chasm separates below. I remain always affectionately yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE."*

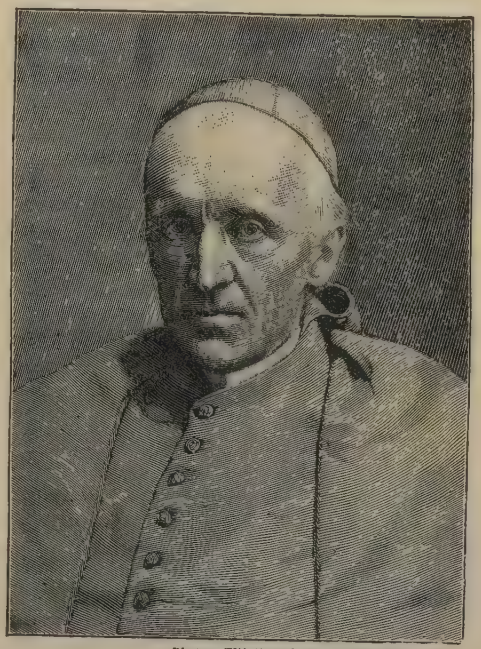

*Photo: Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, W.*
ARCHBISHOP MANNING IN 1875.

Mr. Purcell illustrates Manning's "friendship" by a curious incident, which seems to belong to the year 1875 or 1876. Mr. Gladstone, who was at that time living in Harley Street, had invited his old friend Canon Oakeley to one of his famous Thursday breakfasts. The canon intimated to the archbishop his desire to accept. Manning replied: "I should regard it as a personal affront were any of my priests to visit Mr. Gladstone." For some time Mr. Gladstone's Roman Catholic friends stood aloof. One bishop, who still corresponded, was afraid that it should be known. Even Lord Granville's sister, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, gave up her wonted visits. However, after a very short time, Mr. Gladstone was absorbed in a new problem, which was to bring him back to political activity and power.

F. W. HIRST.

* See Mr. Purcell's "Life of Cardinal Manning," vol. ii., p. 477.

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# CHAPTER XVI.

## MR. GLADSTONE AND THE EASTERN QUESTION, 1876-1879.

The Andrassy Note and the Berlin Memorandum—The Bulgarian Massacres—Liberal Inaction—The Bulgarian Agitation—The Blackheath Meeting—"Bulgarian Horrors"—Russian Intervention—The Six Resolutions—Blessing the Caucus—A Visit to Ireland—A Turkish Appreciation—Progress of the War—A Vote of Credit—The Berlin Treaty—The Cyprus Convention—Jingoism in the Ascendant—Mr. Gladstone's Activity in Opposing it—Omens of Victory—Taking Farewell of Greenwich—An Address to Paupers—On the Way to Midlothian—The First Campaign—An Indictment of Tory Extravagance—Indian Administration—Local Government.

IT would be difficult to distinguish the exact moment at which the Eastern Question came into being. Mr. Gladstone himself dated it from the summer of 1875. That, he said, was the beginning of the action of the Government and the action of the Liberal party as a party. "The Eastern Question began, that is, its recent phase and development, in the summer of 1875, and it immediately assumed great importance." Disturbances, rapidly rising to the proportions of an insurrection, broke out in the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Porte, strong only in cruelty, failed to put down the revolt. The subject Christians had practical sympathy from Servia and Montenegro. Austria was not sorry to see territory ripening for occupation. In the winter of 1875-6 the Powers proposed concerted action by what was called the Andrassy Note, which aimed at compelling the Sultan to put into effect some of his promises of reform. But the Beaconsfield Government objected on "principle" to any interference between the Sultan and his subjects. At last, however, they agreed to the Andrassy Note at the instance of the Turk, who wished to have a friend in the councils of Europe.

**The Eastern Question, 1875.**

**The Andrassy Note.**

In 1876, the Andrassy Note having failed, the Powers produced what they called the Berlin Memorandum. This was flatly rejected by the English Government. When the Concert of Europe proposed to coerce Turkey, England practised the arts of evasion and delay. When the three Empires of Russia, Germany, and Austria prepared to take the initiative, our Conservative Government protested against this as separate action. But, as Mr. Gladstone reminded them:* "You are not at all indisposed to sole action when it suits your purpose, as in the case of the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, when, without consulting anybody, you placed yourselves very much in the position of a private company."†

**The Berlin Memorandum, 1876.**

* See Hansard, July 31st, 1876.

† Mr. Gladstone had opposed, or rather criticised—for the Government dispensed with the advice of the House of Commons—the purchase of the Suez Canal shares earlier in the Session; and that, without regard to popularity, for the scheme was received with what he called "the inflammatory approval" of the metropolitan Press.

English action was fatal to the Memorandum. Disraeli's almost fanatical blindness only hastened the ruin because it quickened the wickedness of a criminal and crumbling Empire. Good Mussulmans were alarmed; and after indulging in one or two palace revolutions, they began to turn to massacre. For this Bulgaria, the scene of an abortive insurrection, was chosen. There was little fighting. Men, women, and children were tortured and murdered. But the Premier laughed at the reports of massacres as "the coffee-house babble brought by an anonymous Bulgarian to a consul." The Liberal Opposition, always tender in its criticisms of foreign policy, failed at first to give proper support to Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons. They got no thanks, only abuse; for Mr. Disraeli actually accused them of "faction," of trying to manufacture party capital out of foreign policy.

**Inaction of the Liberal Party.**

In August and September, 1876, public opinion in England began to be stirred. Mr. Gladstone left his Homer for humanity, his theology for Christianity, and was at once attacked and insulted by the more impudent and guilty of his detractors. It was said that a man who made use of the susceptibilities of the country for the purpose of getting back to office was worse than those who had perpetrated the Bulgarian massacres. When the Session of 1876 closed, Mr. Gladstone was despondent. He thought, as he said afterwards, in recalling the period, that the Bulgarian agitation was "all up" for the time being: "I knew it would revive, and I thought it would revive in the next Session; but I gave it up for the moment until I saw in the newspapers by accident that the working men of England were going to meet in London on the subject of it. I said to myself that moment, 'Then it is alive.' Seeing that it was alive, I did what I could, and we all did what we could; and we stirred the country to such an extent that if the Government had dissolved Parliament at that moment, I do not believe there would have been a hundred men returned to support its policy."

**The Bulgarian Agitation, 1876.**

The London meeting to which Mr. Gladstone referred was at Blackheath on the 9th of September; his speech on that occasion, though not remarkable in a literary sense, is memorable for the marvellous way in which it moved and swayed the audience. Mr. Gladstone insisted that their paramount object must be the cessation of the atrocities, and the absolute prevention of their repetition. It was, he said, a question the dimensions of which carried it far out of the lower region of party differences;

**The Blackheath Meeting, 1876.**

His speech, February 21st, 1876, is a masterpiece of acute financial and political reasoning. "I must own," he said in one prophetic passage, "that I am not without considerable fears and misgivings in regard to the ultimate operation of this precedent. . . . We are now to have a separate and what will be called a selfish interest of our own. It seems to me that we run a very great risk in abandoning that community and identity of interest with the other Great Powers, which we have hitherto enjoyed. Nor do I believe that you will be free from invidious—unmerited, no doubt—but invidious and inconvenient reproaches and suspicions. I am not by any means sure that you will not give a handle to any Government with which you may happen to be at variance to use against you, as a means of intrigue and opposition, this position which you have, I am afraid unwisely, chosen to adopt."

men of all opinions were earnest in the cause, and its first upholders had been the working men. The proofs of the atrocities were unquestionable, and the guilt undoubtedly lay with the Government of Turkey. These atrocities ought to be stopped. "Whatever happens, you must not be put off with excuses and half-hearted, halting declarations. Whatever we ask of our authorities, one thing we must ask above all—that they be prompt. It is the duty of Europe, and of the several Powers of Europe, to stop what we now denounce." Mr. Gladstone invoked a European Concert; it had been proposed that a foreign commission representing the Powers should control Turkish operations in the provinces; but his own plan was more simple, "that all Turkish authorities should walk out of the place." And, when Turkey was left with only nominal suzerainty, "these provinces were not destined to be the property of Russia, or of Austria, or of England, they were destined for the inhabitants of the provinces themselves." To secure this end there must be no "mere hollow truce, but hearty and cordial co-operation between England and Russia." "I am ready as an individual to give the right hand of friendship to Russia, when her objects are just and righteous, and to say in the name of God, 'Go on and prosper.'" If these two Powers agreed, Austria and Germany might surely be trusted to join with them. But besides Austria and Germany there was

"France, that great country which has done so much for civilisation. There is Italy. Ladies and gentlemen, I would presume almost myself to answer for Italy. This is not the first time, in the course of my life, that I have had to meddle with a matter of this kind. Six-and-twenty years ago, I endeavoured to stir up the public sentiment with respect to the abuses of government in Southern Italy; but let me render this justice to a defunct dynasty, that it would be a cruel sin and shame to compare for one moment, or in any of the most marked features of the late atrocities, that government of the Bourbon dynasty in Naples with the abominable system that has been desolating Bulgaria. In Italy you may now see, aye, in its capital, in its great historic city of Rome, that the people have taken your and our method of expressing their opinions; and from the very first outbreak of these difficulties in the East, the sympathies of Italy have been freely given to the oppressed."

The sudden outbreak of the agitation in September was due to the revelations of the *Daily News* and to a report presented by Mr. Baring, the commissioner sent out by the Government to investigate and bless the Turks. It was the publication of this report which brought Mr. Gladstone into the field with "Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East," a pamphlet which appeared three days before the Blackheath meeting, and created a great sensation. Its keynote is struck in these stirring and now famous sentences:—

**"Bulgarian Horrors."**

"Let us insist that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner—namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas—one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned . . . . If it be allowable that the executive power of Turkey should renew at this great crisis, by permission or authority of Europe, the charter of its existence in Bulgaria, then there is not on record since the beginning of political society a protest that man has lodged against intolerable misgovernment, or a stroke he has dealt at loathsome tyranny, that ought not henceforward to be branded as a crime."

From this moment to the Liberal triumph of 1880, Mr. Gladstone assumed, by his own express admission, the *rôle* of a political agitator, setting himself "night and day to counterwork the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield." For nearly three years the principles of liberty and humanity struggled for the mastery with the official principle of *Imperium et Libertas*—Lord Beaconsfield's expression, or, in one significant word, Jingoism. The agitation, powerfully stimulated by a National Conference—not unworthy of its name—at St. James's Hall on the 8th of December, 1876, at once produced an effect upon the policy of the Government. It brought about the Conference at Constantinople, at the end of 1876 and beginning of 1877, and to this Conference Lord Salisbury went, carrying with him the goodwill, possibly even the confidence, of the official Liberal Opposition.

Meanwhile Disraeli's policy was convincing the Balkan populations that Russia was the only friend worth having, the only State which had the will and the power to free them from the obscene tyranny of the Turk. The hour of Russian advance was about to strike when Mr. Gladstone, on March 23rd, 1877, with great judgment and foresight, seized an opportunity of pressing the claims of Russia on the consideration of civilised England, and by so doing prevented, if the act of one man can be said to have prevented, Disraeli from extending anything more than "moral" support to the Ottoman Empire.

**The Intervention of Russia, 1877.**

"It is with something like shame and sorrow I confess that of the little which has been done for the Christians of Turkey by the Powers of Europe, nearly all is due to Russia. The extension of her influence over these races I should view with the greatest jealousy and aversion. To her it is not that the Principalities of the Danube owe the final stage of erecting themselves into a single State, but to her it is that they owe the privileges and rights which they had previously obtained. To her it is that in the main it is owing that the gallant efforts of the Servians—mainly confined, after all, to a guerilla warfare—resulted in the establishment of the autonomy or local freedom of Servia. To her in no small degree is owing the establishment of the kingdom of Greece; for, although I rejoice to think that, through the beneficent action and the splendid genius of Mr. Canning, we are enabled to claim a good share in the honour of that exploit, yet Mr. Canning did not live to see the accomplishment of his work, and another influence came in—the influence of the Duke of Wellington."

On the 24th of April Russia declared war on Turkey; and on the 7th of May Mr. Gladstone, following his usual method when in Opposition upon great occasions, gave notice of Resolutions, six in all, for the purpose of enforcing strict neutrality and of promoting the coercion of Turkey by means of a concert of European Powers. At first the party was exactly divided. Sir Charles Dilke was acting with Mr. Gladstone against the party Whips; and he has stated, having the list in his possession, that on the day when peace was made between the two sections, Mr. Gladstone agreeing to move, instead of the six, one simple Resolution, 110 Liberal members were pledged to vote with Mr. Gladstone for the Resolutions, and precisely the same number with Lord Hartington and the Whips against the Resolutions. The line of cleavage was difficult to distinguish; families were divided and cliques split up. But generally speaking, the Whigs and "peace-at-any-price" section of the Radicals formed the official combination. The party crisis while it lasted was

**The Six Resolutions, 1877.**

acute: "They are in consternation at the Reform Club," wrote Matthew Arnold to his wife on May 5th, "because, while most of the Liberal party want to go with Lubbock and Lord Hartington, the Liberal constituencies are pouring in letters and telegrams to their members desiring them to vote with Gladstone. *Chamberlain has organised the thing*, with the hope, no doubt, of winning over Gladstone for future purposes; and he is a great and successful organiser." Mr. Gladstone had consented to amend his Resolutions in order to conciliate the hesitating and timid waverers; and his speech is a moderate but effective indictment of the policy pursued by the Government, a policy neatly summed up by one of its own members in the phrase, "moral support" to Turkey. Coming to his peroration, Mr. Gladstone warmed into enthusiasm:—

"Sir, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition, older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honour and justice. And, Sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to dress up the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy in the garb of British interests, and then, with a new and base idolatry, fall down and worship them?"

The freeing of the Balkan provinces was a glorious mission in which the civilised Powers might well compete. Were we to stand aside, or worse, assist the Turk, and so drive the Balkan population into alliance with Russia? The people of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria were seeking not Russia but freedom—deliverance from an intolerable burden of woe and shame:—

"But, Sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the Cabinet who would try to win it if they were free to act on their own beliefs and aspiration. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize; but be assured that whether you mean to claim for yourselves even a single leaf in that immortal chaplet of renown which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and upon your own duty, I believe for one that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these provinces has sounded."

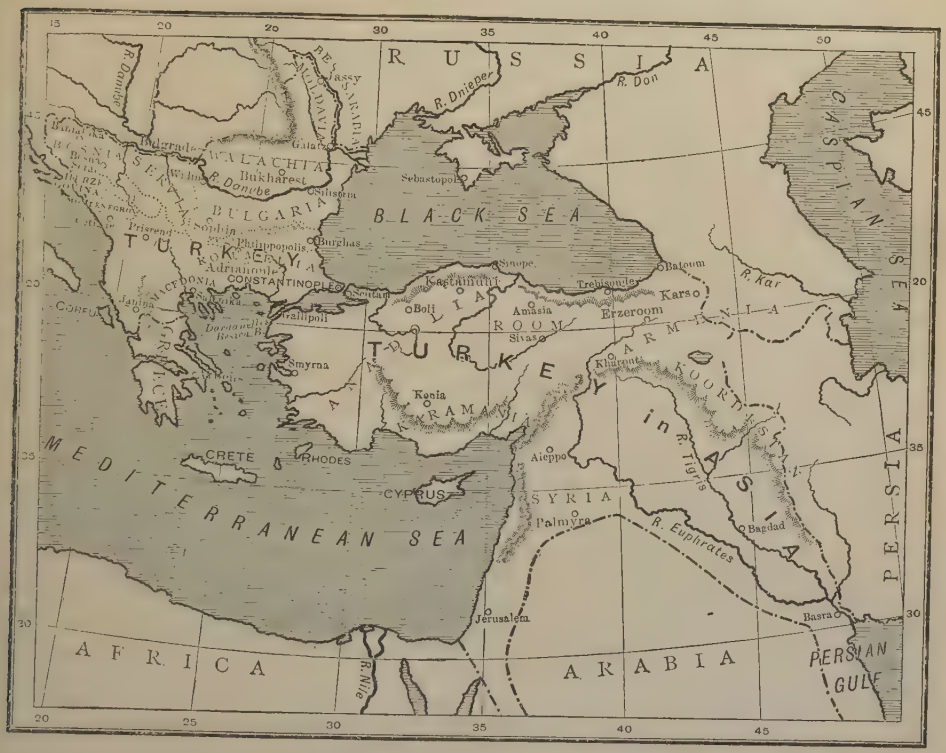
Mr. Gladstone's Resolution was defeated by 354 to 223 votes, the division being on strictly party lines, save that a few so-called Liberals of the Roebuckian type and a majority of the Irish Home Rulers voted with the Government.

**Mr. Chamberlain.**

Mr. Chamberlain, whose splendid municipal achievements as Mayor of Birmingham had brought him into the Imperial Parliament to represent new ideas and new aspirations, was already coming to the front as an advanced Radical. It was under his auspices that Mr. Gladstone, at the end of May, paid a visit to Birmingham on the famous occasion when the Caucus was founded. The houses were decorated, the streets lined with enthusiastic spectators. Mr. Gladstone was welcomed by town councillors and played along the streets by trades union bands. During his visit he

made two speeches on the Bulgarian atrocities and discoursed on the healthy political life of Birmingham, shown in its "external improvements, its education, its union and gradation of classes." But the occasion of the visit was the execution of the Caucus plan, to which Mr. Gladstone now publicly gave his sanction. Representatives from a number of Liberal associations met at Birmingham for the purpose of federation. Mr. Bright expressed his opinion that federation was necessary in self-defence against the trades unions and the tacit combination of the Tory

**Blessing the Caucus, 1877.**




MAP OF THE TURKISH DOMINIONS IN 1875.

vested interests, but he detested a programme as much as the Thirty-Nine Articles. Mr. Chamberlain, however, wished to use the Caucus for the agitation of programmes on which the Liberal party might unite. Mr. Gladstone hoped that the party discipline would never be so strict on the Liberal as it was on the Conservative side. The resolutions in favour of federation were carried unanimously. It was a great victory for Mr. Chamberlain. Staid Liberal leaders disliked this change as tending to degrade the representative into a mere delegate. Mr. Gladstone defended it on the ground that it carried out the Liberal principle that each member of the Liberal party should feel himself to possess a personal share in directing the policy of the party.

In November Mr. Gladstone was able to fulfil a long-cherished wish. We have seen how years before he had endeavoured to persuade his friend Hope-Scott to visit Ireland, where they might travel quietly and devote themselves to acquiring information.* While in Dublin he made a delightful speech recalling the ancient glories of Ireland and especially those centuries "when she had almost a monopoly of learning and piety, and when she held up the truths of civilisation, of true Christian civilisation, in Northern and Western Europe." He was greatly impressed by the Irish capital, and astonished, if not dismayed, by "the traffic movement" in the streets.†

In Dublin.

Mr. Gladstone made the most of his visit; but it was not a long one, for on the 23rd November he was back in Hawarden, giving a lecture upon the Eastern Question. To illustrate the theme that systematic slander is the daily instrument by which the Turkish Governments maintain themselves, he quoted an extraordinary account which had appeared in a Turkish newspaper of "the man Gladstone, projector of mischief." The biographer stated that his subject's real name was Grozaden, that he was, in his youth, the servant of a Bulgarian pig-dealer, that as such he was naturally destitute of all feelings of humanity, and lived only to love gold. "Gladstone's nickname—Eyes of Gold," continued the writer, "is derived from his covetousness for gold. According to the information vouchsafed by persons who knew him, he is middle-sized, has a yellow complexion, wears a half beard, and is thick-haired. Only his forehead is open, it being a token of his mischievous turn of mind. Owing to this same reason, the foreside of his head is bald, to the extent that those who look at him from afar take him to be scalped. His nose is prominent and aquiline, his mouth is very ugly, like the words which proceed from it, and when he shuts it his two fore teeth fall one decimetre beyond the upper lip. Such is his extraordinary shape." "Nothing," said the lecturer emphatically, with some little want of humour, "could be more absurd than such a statement."

A Turkish Appreciation of Mr. Gladstone.

The year 1878 has many claims to notoriety. For the particular purpose of this book it will be enough to point out that it was the year in which Jingoism and Lord Beaconsfield's popularity registered their highest points on the political barometer. When the new year opened, the Russians were at the gates of Constantinople. Plevna, after an heroic defence, had fallen in December. On January 8th the Porte opened negotiations with Russia; on the 10th the Shipka Pass was forced and a Turkish army made prisoner; on the 23rd the British fleet was ordered to the Dardanelles "to accelerate peace," and to look after British interests. On the 28th the fleet entered the Dardanelles, and on the same day,

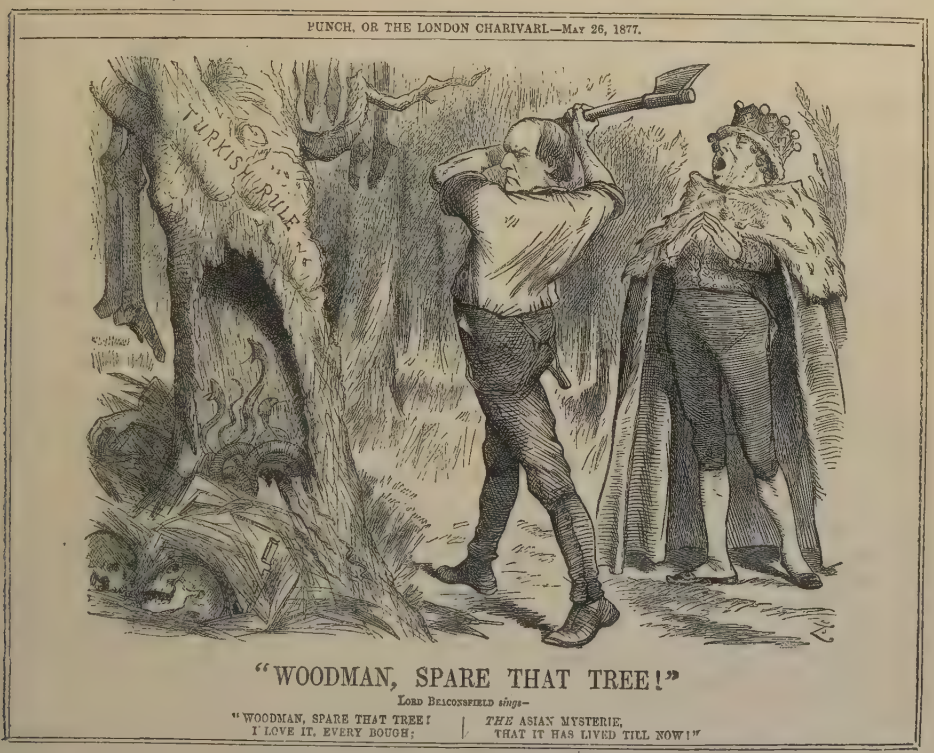
Progress of the War, 1878.

* See speech at Dublin, November 7th, 1877, from which it appears that the invitation which had led him to apply to Hope-Scott was from Philip Pusey, a distinguished agriculturist. The fulfilment of the plan was prevented "by a most peculiar and important circumstance of a family nature."

† Sir Edward Hamilton, in his charming monograph (London, Murray, 1898), notes, as the only exception to Mr. Gladstone's personal intrepidity, his "nervous vacillation" when crossing a crowded thoroughfare. This was "partly attributable to the vast development of street traffic in his old age," and only showed itself "during the last two decades of his life."

receiving fresh instructions, retired to Besika Bay. These warlike oscillations led to the withdrawal of Lord Carnarvon from the Cabinet. Lord Derby postponed his resignation for a couple of months. Then he also resigned in consequence of a decision to call out the Reserves. Parliament was assembled early in order that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, might propose a vote of credit of £6,000,000 towards increasing the armaments of the country. Mr. Gladstone took the lead in opposing this expenditure, declaring at Oxford that it appeared to him to be the most

A Vote of Credit.


PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—May 26, 1877.
TURKISH RULE
"WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE!"
LORD BEACONSFIELD sings—
"WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE!
I LOVE IT, EVERY BOUGH;
THE ASIAN MYSTERIE,
THAT IT HAS LIVED TILL NOW!"

*(By permission of Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew and Co.)*

indefensible proposition that had ever, in his time, been submitted to Parliament. Lord Beaconsfield, replying to this and other speeches, at Knightsbridge, described his rival as "a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and to glorify himself."

The times were troubled and stormy. Now the Russians seemed ready to stop, now determined to persevere in their march on Constantinople. Every fresh move created a panic on the Stock Exchange. Trade was suffering almost as if the country were actually at war. But Jingo feelings were so

strong, especially in the City, that the House of Commons would not listen to Mr. Gladstone's almost single-handed opposition to the Vote of Credit, or even to his suggestion that in the interests of peace it should be postponed. On the 3rd of March, however, the treaty of San Stefano was signed. Then followed a long course of mystification and negotiation, happily described by Lord Rosebery, so far as the English Government was concerned, as "a policy of obscurity enlivened by sarcasm." Finally, on the 3rd of August, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, "the two heroes of the day," came back from the Berlin Congress bearing in their hands "Peace with Honour." *

The Berlin Treaty, 1878.

By the Berlin Treaty the Porte undertook to ameliorate the condition of that part of Armenia which was left to her, and fully recognised the principles of religious liberty and equality. Russia acquired parts of Armenia and Bessarabia, and the Czar promised that Batoum should be essentially a free commercial port. It was owing to the pressure exerted by Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury that Macedonia and the greater part of Armenia were preserved for Turkey. "No wonder that," to quote from the columns of the *Standard* late in the following year, "the Sultan's Ministers lay great stress on the maintenance of the Beaconsfield Cabinet." And yet, in protecting Turkey and making England responsible for Turkish dominion, Lord Beaconsfield had succeeded in aggrandising Russia:—

Aggrandising Russia.

"I have no fear of the territorial extension of Russia in Asia; I think they are woman's fears. But, at any rate, I do not wish to encourage her aggressive tendencies in Asia or anywhere else, but I admit it may be, and probably is, that there is some benefit attending the transfer of a portion of Armenia from Turkey to Russia. But here is a very strange fact. You know that that portion of Armenia includes the port of Batoum. Lord Salisbury has lately stated to the country that by the Treaty of Berlin the port of Batoum is to be only a commercial port. If the Treaty of Berlin stated that it was to be only a commercial port, which, of course, could not be made into an arsenal, that fact would be very important. But happily, gentlemen, although treaties are concealed from us nowadays, the Treaty of Berlin is an open instrument. We can consult it for ourselves; and when we consult the Treaty of Berlin we find it states that Batoum shall be essentially a commercial port, but not that it shall be only a commercial port. Why, gentlemen, Leith is an essentially commercial port, but there is nothing to prevent the people of this country, if, in their wisdom or in their folly, they should think fit, from constituting Leith into a great naval arsenal or fortification." †

So much for Mr. Gladstone's criticisms of the diplomatic achievements of the Treaty of Berlin. Batoum is not now a free commercial port; and it *is* a great naval arsenal. The Russian Armenians do not live in an earthly paradise; but their country seems a heaven compared with the hell which their compatriots, the survivors of the recent massacres, suffer on the other side of the border.

But the Treaty of Berlin did not stand alone. Hardly had Peace with Honour been announced amid the plaudits of the new Imperialists, when

* Lord Beaconsfield to a London crowd, July 16th, 1878. "Lord Salisbury and myself have brought you back peace, but [observe the apologetic "but"] a peace, I hope, with honour, which may satisfy our Sovereign and tend to the welfare of the country."

† Mr. Gladstone's speech at Dalkeith, November 27th, 1879.

the disclosure of a secret Convention known as the Anglo-Turkish Convention, or the Cyprus Convention—on account of the worthless bribe which sealed it—renewed the "national" joy. It was a solemn treaty, binding Turkey to govern well and England to protect, enforce, and sanction that good government. But this work of supervision was not to be undertaken without a consideration—a very valuable consideration if Lord Beaconsfield was to be believed. In the words of the Royal Speech—the surprise which wound up a Session of surprises—"to promote the objects of this agreement I have undertaken the occupation and administration of Cyprus." Mr. Gladstone denounced the Convention as "insane," and both in this and in the following year criticised it on grounds different indeed, but consistent, solid, and convincing. In the first place it was a gross, though clandestine, breach of the public law of Europe. But this was not all. The Government had misused and abused the treaty-making power, and so had endangered, by making odious, an important and, under its proper limitations, a useful prerogative of the Crown. The Convention had been concluded behind the back of Parliament, and in contempt of the moral title of the nation and its representatives to be aware of the principles on which a Government is acting, and of the ends which it has in view.* Lastly, there was "the valuable consideration," the acquisition of Cyprus. A year later the word Cyprus could not be mentioned on any platform in the country without exciting uproarious laughter. It is difficult for those who cannot recall that year to imagine the exultation that went abroad through the land when its virtual acquisition—at a rent—was announced. What, asked Mr. Gladstone, who was the first to prick the bubble, was Cyprus to be according to Lord Beaconsfield and his fellow Imperialists?—

**The Cyprus Convention, 1878.**

**The Acquisition of Cyprus.**

"Why, in the first place, it was to be a naval harbour, better than the harbour and arsenal of Malta. That was a declaration which, unless I am much mistaken, proceeded on a solemn occasion from the mouth of the Prime Minister. And not only so, but you were to have this wonderful harbour with great rapidity, for, on the 28th or 23rd of July, 1878, the Prime Minister made a promise to the House of Lords in these words: 'By this time next year'—that is, July, 1879—'your Lordships will find that there are ports sufficient to accommodate British ships'; that means, of course, British ships of war. There is no such port. There is not the slightest prospect of such a port. They are not making such a port. They have no money to make such a port. I have no doubt that if you will give them some millions of your money—that money, the total store of which they have not much contributed to increase—if you will give them some millions of your money, in time they will make a port there, or anywhere else."

So much for the harbour of Cyprus; but it was also to be a "place of arms." It was to command the Suez Canal, and guard the road to India. In Cyprus would be stationed "a great military force that was to overawe Russia, and was, in case of need, to march across the mountains of Asia Minor, I suppose, by the aid of the instrument which used to be called seven-league boots, and to intimidate Russia on the Armenian frontier. Is it, gentlemen, a place of arms?"—Mr. Gladstone was addressing the people of Glasgow only eighteen months after the Prime Minister's declaration—"Well, it is a place of arms, but it is a

* Speeches at Perth, December 1st, 1879, and at Glasgow, December 5th.

place, I believe, only of the arms of about two hundred men. They began, indeed, with sacrificing the health of some thousands of British troops in Cyprus; but they knew very well that could not be continued. That would not serve on the hustings, nor would it serve for any other good purpose. So, instead of being a place of arms, it is a place in which we have not a force sufficient to defend it against the meanest armament that ever undertook the most trivial operation."

But in spite of all this, in spite of the crash that followed, there can be no mistaking one thing. For the moment Lord Beaconsfield was immensely popular. Writers and speakers, who had to write and speak before thinking, were all with him, captivated by the mystery and glamour of an incomparable actor. To trade upon national vanity, to pander to national prejudices, to divert attention from domestic reforms by a series of foreign surprises, to hector without weakening the strong, to disregard the petitions of the weak—this tasteless but not cheap imitation of French Imperialism made Lord Beaconsfield the hero and Mr. Gladstone the victim of the midsummer madness of 1878. Mr. Gladstone was assailed by anonymous letters of the most loathsome description; he could not take Mrs. Gladstone for a walk from his own house; his windows were broken by the mob; on more than one occasion he owed his protection to the police; he was made the victim of a social boycott, which went to hitherto unheard-of lengths. "Smart" people refused to meet an ex-Premier at dinner. Most extraordinary fact of all, Mr. Gladstone received no invitation to the wedding of the Duke of Connaught in the spring of 1879.

**Jingoism in the Ascendant, 1878.**

However, though it was not, as he afterwards admitted, "particularly safe," Mr. Gladstone did not on that account neglect pedestrianism: and it happened that one Saturday afternoon in the summer of 1878 a literary pedestrian encountered the great man and took a snap-shot portrait, not over friendly, but drawn in so vivid a manner and with so vigorous a pen that it may be introduced to supplement the work of artists and photographers:—

"The first impression produced was by the hat—its inferior condition and enormous cubical content. The next was by the face: the eyes were cast down, the large nose basked placidly beneath; a blandness wreathed every feature, and seemed heightened to smugness about the lips. Then the clothes: in the porch (so to speak) of a wide 'stick-up' collar, lay a pronounced and wrinkled dewlap; a black tie with white spots was knotted somewhat awry over the white shirt front; the chest was deep and capacious, like that of a well-bred foxhound; the fancy-coloured waistcoat that framed it drew the eye like a shop window; the coat of shiny black hung loosely from the shoulders; the trousers, of light grey woollen stuff, were scant about the ankles, exposing the light-coloured hose beneath and the tops of the wide, comfortable shoes. One hand was gloved, the other was bare, and swung a walking-stick rhythmically to and fro. The entire figure might have been that of a missionary absorbed in self-congratulation over a draught of souls. As I drew near in passing, however, the eyes were raised and flashed upon me for an instant. Ah, no! this was no missionary. Unless eyes can deceive much more than they are famed to do, far other things dwelled behind those orbs than the mild persuasions of religion. A whole universe of significance was there: ambition, rule, mastery, high effort, anger, courage, and endurance—anything was credible of them." *

The part played by the "retired" leader in Parliament during the

* Article by Mr. W. L. Watson in the *Outlook*, May 28th, 1898.

Sessions of 1878 and 1879, though not absolutely small, was trifling relatively to his unbounded activity in the country. His platform speeches and addresses during these years would probably run to three figures at the least. Most, indeed, of these were in connection with the agitation against Turkey; for, in the sacred cause of liberty and Christianity in Eastern Europe and Western Asia, he not only spoke and lectured and pamphleteered, but "poured letter after letter into the newspapers," and "darkened the sky with controversial postcards." But the East was not by any means his only subject. In the year 1879 alone we find him speaking or writing on official salaries, on hiring-fairs and their abuses, on coffee taverns and Temperance, on School Board education and garden cultivation, on Liberal and Tory finance, and on the causes of his political changes.

Abnormal Activity.

There is no sign, indeed, that in his four years of political agitation (1876–1879) he dropped any of his interests. Lectures on Homer still occurred in his engagements. He brought out a handbook to Homer; and began a Homeric dictionary to which he thought of devoting the remainder of his life. He found time to track the use of the false genitive in English back to Goldsmith, who "had great natural graces of style, but was too hasty and careless to carry great authority."* The learned and brilliant criticism of Macaulay's life and works, substantial essays upon questions of theology and periods of ecclesiastical history, a valuable contrast between the British and the American constitution, "The County Franchise and Mr. Lowe thereon," "Last Words on the County Franchise," and a "Postscriptum on the County Franchise,"† do not by any means exhaust his by-articles, much less his bypaths of research and investigation, during this period.

In the early spring of 1878 Mr. Gladstone, who had never been happy as a metropolitan candidate, announced that he would not again stand for Greenwich. Immediately a number of constituencies made desperate efforts to secure him, especially pressing invitations coming to him from Leeds and Manchester. He said goodbye to Greenwich before Christmas, and soon afterwards a rumour went about that he meant to stand for Midlothian against Lord Dalkeith, whose father, the Duke of Buccleuch, had been a colleague of Mr. Gladstone's in the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel.

Taking Farewell of Greenwich, 1878.

The weakness of Liberalism and the unpopularity of Mr. Gladstone at this time—at least outside the narrow limits of London "Society"

* Dean Stanley once complained to a friend that much as he had seen of Mr. Gladstone, and often as he had talked with him, he did not think he had ever influenced him. "Yes," he added, recollecting himself, "I influenced him in one matter. I told him he ought never to use the word *reliable*, and I gave him my reasons. Some time afterwards I met Mr. G. in the street, and he said as we parted: 'I have never used that wretched word *reliable* since you spoke to me about it.'" See Locker-Lampson's "My Confidences," p. 348.

† In the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1878. In the "Gleanings," vol. i., p. 193, Mr. Gladstone adds a footnote: "It was an inconsistency to write this Postscript after my 'Last Words.' But the soft and silken cord with which the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* guides his contributors usually draws them whithersoever he will." Mr. Gladstone was easily "drawn" by editors. Sir Edward Hamilton tells us that the item which afforded him most satisfaction in his personal accounts was any profit he might derive from his literary labours.

—have been much exaggerated. An illustration may be drawn from a report of a case in the Bolton County Court (March 6th, 1879). Two members of a Liberal Association which had enjoyed a trip to Hawarden, one a photographer, the other a stationer, had seen Mr. Gladstone felling a tree in the park, and hit upon the idea of "taking" him in woodman's costume, axe in hand. The photograph was taken; but the stationer, receiving no reward, proceeded to sue the artist for eight guineas, which he thought himself entitled to as his share in the profits. The court decided that there had been no contract. It appeared, however, in the evidence that the photographer had actually received £500 for a half-share in the proceeds of the negative, and it was further stated that an offer of £1,000 for the plate had been made by the London Stereoscopic Company and refused.* We may find another token of Mr. Gladstone's personal ascendancy, in the "Season Number" of *Vanity Fair*, July 1st, 1879. To a capital cartoon, reproduced on the next page, and a long depreciation, is added one short sentence:—"Mr. Gladstone is still the most popular man in England." †

**An Address to Paupers, 1879.**

To the year 1879 belongs one of those small incidents which test the goodness of a public man. Arrangements had been made by a local authority to give a dinner to the aged and infirm people in St. Pancras workhouse. Many members of Parliament were invited to attend, and—if it so pleased them—address a few words of comfort and cheer to the inmates. In the event Mr. Gladstone was the only M.P. who came, and nothing could be more touching than the homely, kindly way in which he addressed, at the age of seventy, his audience of unfortunate poor people, all of whom were over sixty years old. He also went round the infirmary, speaking words of cheer to the sick who had been unable to hear his speech.

**On the Way to Midlothian, 1879.**

Mr. Gladstone left Liverpool for Midlothian on the morning of November 21th. Large crowds assembled to cheer him at the stations —at St. Helen's, Wigan, and Preston. At Carlisle he was met by a number of leading Liberals, and left the train to receive addresses and presentations at the County Hotel. There, and again at Hawick and at Galashiels, he made short speeches—the skirmishes before the battle, the preludes to the great campaign.

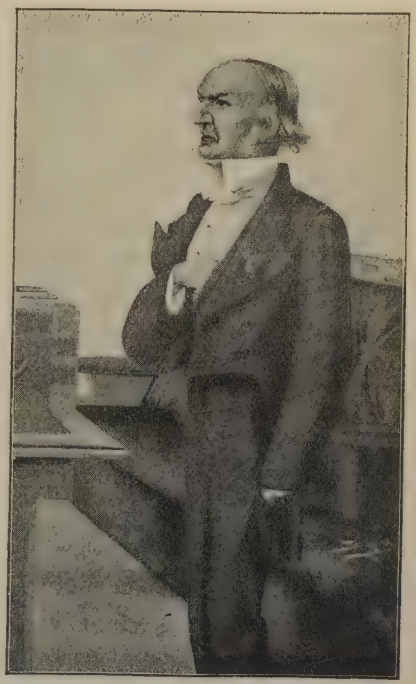
**The First Campaign.**

Not only the rest of Scotland, but the whole of Great Britain turned its eyes upon Midlothian during that week. In the county itself the enthusiasm and excitement were unparalleled. Mr. Gladstone was besieged wherever he went by multitudes of admirers. At Edinburgh, Dalkeith, and West Calder vast audiences were amazed and delighted by the burning eloquence of the new candidate for the county. The Bulgarian atrocities were still in the minds of men, the folly and iniquity of the Afghan and

* See also a letter to the *Times*, March 9th, 1879.

† Mr. George Russell, who was kind enough to point out this (as well as much more that stands unacknowledged in these pages, though gratefully remembered by the writer), added in a note:—"Considering that it was only a year after Lord Beaconsfield's triumphant return from Berlin, and that *Vanity Fair* was violently Tory, this struck me very forcibly."

the Zulu Wars* were before their eyes; and the people found the silent verdicts of reason and conscience expressed and expounded with fervid denunciations and unanswerable arguments by the greatest of their countrymen. At the end of the week few could doubt that the Beaconsfield Government was doomed; fewer still seriously entertained the pious hope which Mr. Gladstone expressed in his first speech that "the country would give to Lord Granville and Lord Hartington the responsible charge of its affairs." But he was still wavering between the fierce light of publicity and the pleasures of academic shade. Just before entering upon the Midlothian campaign, when every morning's paper brought fresh details of the disastrous "forward" movement which Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton were promoting in Afghanistan,† Mr. Gladstone was at Cambridge spending the precious hours of daylight in the study of the unique collection bequeathed by Parker, Elizabeth's Archbishop, to the library of Corpus Christi College. Professor Fawcett used to tell how one evening after dinner Mr. Gladstone drew him aside saying, "I hear there is some very important news to-day, Fawcett. Tell me all about it. I have been occupied all day in the Corpus Christi Library comparing the editions of the Thirty-Nine Articles there with ours in the Prayer Book, and have had no time to look at the paper."



"THE PEOPLE'S WILLIAM": THE "VANITY FAIR" CARTOON.

**The Midlothian Orations.**

Several extracts have already been made from the series of speeches which were delivered during the first Midlothian campaign. It lasted exactly a week, Mr. Gladstone staying as the guest of Lord Rosebery at Dalmeny. It is impossible to follow the campaign without feeling that Mr. Gladstone was fulfilling his promise and his purpose. He was attacking the policy of the Government mercilessly all along the line. It was no milk-and-water denunciation of this or that measure. Others might construct their "patriotic" and ineffective mosaics of praise and blame. His only

* "We have made war upon the Zulus. We have thereby become responsible for their territory; and not only this, but we are now about to make war upon a chief lying to the northward of the Zulus; and Sir Bartle Frere, who was the chief authority for the proceedings of the Government in Afghanistan, has announced in South Africa that it will be necessary for us to extend our dominions until we reach the Portuguese frontier to the north."—First Midlothian Speech.

† The attack on the British Residency at Cabul and the murder of Sir Louis Cavagnari had taken place on September 3rd, 1879.

thought was to make a straightforward appeal to the country to support the Liberal party because the principles and the administration of Lord Beaconsfield and his followers were not merely in part misguided or in some respects unfortunate or imperfectly thought out, but thoroughly depraved and immoral, because Ministers had brought shame and disaster upon the country, because if continued in power they might inflict permanent dishonour and irretrievable ruin.

He looked at their past promises and their future policy in every department of statesmanship and passed an almost universal condemnation. If we except the sphere of foreign politics, his financial criticisms were the most destructive and the most unanswerable. In this respect it was a Government which had written its name upon history and would have plenty of memorials; and of these "one of the first, greatest, and most undeniable" was the perpetuation of the income-tax, which had been raised from twopence to fivepence. This was only one sign of Ministerial extravagance—an extravagance which could not be traced to any one cause. "It bubbles up everywhere." In the five years from 1869–70 down to 1873–74 the Liberal Government were able to present to the country five surpluses, and these five surpluses in all amounted in round numbers to as much as £17,000,000; the aggregate of the successive deficits of the Tory Government could not be less than £6,000,000. Then the Gladstonian Administration had imposed £3,000,000 of taxation, and remitted £15,400,000, so that the balance of taxation remitted was £12,400,000; the Tory Government had remitted £487,000, and imposed nearly £6,000,000.*

**Tory Extravagance.**

Lord Beaconsfield's financial record in India, Mr. Gladstone asserted, was even worse than his record at home. The increase of expenditure under Lord Lytton had been enormous; and the only asset of the Indian taxpayer was the Royal Titles Act. Never had a country paid so dearly for the difference between Queen and Empress. He would not analyse what share of the increase might be due to the folly of the Government:—"But what are we to say to this great fact, that with these tremendous figures staring them in the face, they have not taken even these figures as a warning against the setting on foot of their most mischievous and, in my opinion, most guilty plans for the invasion of Afghanistan."

**Indian Administration.**

To attempt to summarise the whole doctrine of the Midlothian speeches would be quite impossible. In them may be found discussions of the land laws, with attacks upon the law of entail and settlement and upon the practice of inserting covenants in leases to restrain freedom of cultivation. Some questions were treated with marked moderation and caution, as the liquor laws and Scottish Disestablishment. The domestic questions which were placed in the forefront were the land laws, the manufacture of faggot votes, and local government.† County government called for radical reform, as did also the system of imperial doles which

* See a very brilliant financial speech delivered in the Corn Exchange, Edinburgh, on November 29th, 1879, to an audience of about 5,000. The speech lasted two hours, and immediately afterwards Mr. Gladstone addressed 20,000 people in the Waverley Market.

† "Let me say that in my opinion these two great objects of local government and the land laws ought now to occupy a foremost place in the thoughts of every man who aspires to be a legislator."

A TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION AT WEST CALDER.

the Beaconsfield Administration had been steadily extending, in line with a policy of bureaucracy and centralisation. But there was another direction in which a very large extension of local government might be applied with good results:—

Local Government and Home Rule.

"In the matter of local government, there may lie a solution of some national and even Imperial difficulties. It will not be in my power to enter largely while I am in the country upon the important question of the condition of Ireland; but you know well how unhappily the action of Parliament has been impeded and disorganised, from considerations no doubt conscientiously entertained by a part of the Irish representatives, and from their desire to establish what they term Home Rule. If you ask me what I think of Home Rule, I must tell you that I will only answer you when you tell me how Home Rule is related to local government. I am friendly to local government. I am friendly to large local privileges and powers. I desire, I almost say I intensely desire, to see Parliament relieved of some portion of its duties. I see the efficiency of Parliament interfered with not only by obstruction from Irish members, but even more gravely by the enormous weight that is placed upon the time and the minds of those whom you send to represent you. We have got an overweighted Parliament; and if Ireland, or any other portion of the country, is desirous and able so to arrange its affairs that, by taking the local part or some local part of its transactions off the hands of Parliament, it can liberate and strengthen Parliament for Imperial concerns, I say I will not only accord a reluctant assent, but I will give a zealous support to any such scheme. One limit, gentlemen, one limit only, I know to the extension of local government. It is this: nothing can be done, in my opinion, by any wise statesman or right-minded Briton to weaken or compromise the authority of the Imperial Parliament, because the Imperial Parliament must be supreme in these three Kingdoms. And nothing that creates a doubt upon that supremacy can be tolerated by any intelligent and patriotic man." *

After completing his engagements in Midlothian and Edinburgh, Mr. Gladstone travelled northward to Taymouth Castle, the seat of Lord Breadalbane. On the way he took advantage of a short stoppage at Perth to deliver a speech—with his hat off, though snow was falling fast—in the open air outside the station. After a few days' rest, which took the form of preparing a rectorial address of several columns in length, Mr. Gladstone left for Glasgow, where, in addition to delivering his address as Lord Rector to the University students, he made three political speeches. At length, on December 6th, he was on his way back to Hawarden, after perhaps the most remarkable and successful of individual achievements in the annals of British political oratory.

F. W. Hirst.

* Speech at Dalkeith, November 26th, 1879. The Irish Home Rulers, of course, talked about having much more. Thus on July 11th of this same year, Mr. O'Connor Power explained to the House of Commons that he had been sent there to carry out a great object —"I may say it is nothing less than to win the legislative independence of a nation."

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# CHAPTER XVII.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S SECOND PREMIERSHIP, 1880-1885.

Lord Beaconsfield's Dissolution Manifesto—Mr. Gladstone's Election Address—His Financial Criticisms—The Marylebone Meeting—In Midlothian Again—Speech at Edinburgh—The Liberals not a Peace-at-any-Price Party—The Bag-and-Baggage Policy—An Indictment of Austria—South Africa—Afghanistan—Questions of Home Policy—The English Farmer—Speeches at Dalkeith and West Calder—Returned for Midlothian and Leeds—Lord Hartington and the Formation of a Ministry—The New Administration—Lord Ripon Sent to India—A French Portrait—Reconciliation with the Emperor of Austria—Dealing with the Eastern Question—Montenegro—The Bradlaugh Difficulty—A Good Session's Work (1880)—Ireland Coming to the Front—Compensation for Disturbance Bill—A Temporary Breakdown—Coercion for Ireland—The Closure—The Coercion Bill Carried—Tribute to Lord Beaconsfield—The Transvaal—The Irish Land Bill (1881)—Parnell's Test Cases—Suppression of the Land League—Negotiations with Mr. Parnell—Resignation of Mr. Forster—The Phœnix Park Tragedy—Thessaly Free—At Cannes—Affirmation Bill—Contagious Diseases Act—A Cruise with Tennyson—Enfranchising the Labourers—The Egyptian Imbroglio—Imperialism and Africa—Bombardment of Alexandria—General Gordon's Mission—Penj-deh—Defeat and Resignation of the Government.

WHEN the Session of 1880 opened, the Government was still reeling under the tremendous blows inflicted by the Midlothian campaign. But a dissolution was not expected until the autumn, and there were still hopes or apprehensions that before the day of reckoning arrived the Prime Minister might revive his popularity by some grand Imperial stroke. There was, however, one very good reason for dissolving Parliament: it was impossible to disguise much longer the desperate state of the finances, and in particular to keep in decent concealment the real cost of the war in Afghanistan. Moreover, the result of a bye-election at Southwark had been very favourable to the Government; and the Prime Minister was confident of again securing a majority.

Accordingly, on the 9th of March, to the general surprise, it was announced that Parliament would be dissolved as soon as possible after the Budget had been brought in. Lord Beaconsfield's manifesto to the country was issued in the form of a letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and consisted of an ingenious but premature attempt to make Home Rule for Ireland the issue. The Liberal party was already beginning to show a distaste for coercion; and Lord Ramsay had actually fought a bye-election at Liverpool (unsuccessfully) on Home Rule lines. A portion of the population of Ireland was, the Premier said, attempting to sever the constitutional tie which united it to Great Britain:—

Lord Beaconsfield's Dissolution Manifesto, March, 1880.

"It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine; the strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English Minister should be to consolidate that co-operation which renders irresistible a community educated as our own in an equal love of liberty and law."

There were some who even challenged "the expediency of the Imperial character of this realm." If they were allowed to replace the present Ministry the power of England and the peace of Europe would be threatened. Sir Stafford Northcote was left to defend the financial policy of the Government; and he did it by contrasting his debts and deficiencies with the debts and deficiencies which would have arisen if they had embarked on one big war instead of a number of little ones: "the war into which, but for a decided policy, we should have been drawn would have been more burdensome both to the taxpayer of our day and to posterity."

On the 11th of March Lord Hartington and Mr. Gladstone issued their addresses to the electors of North-East Lancashire and of Midlothian. Mr. Gladstone's address is buoyant enough. After rejoicing at the dissolution, though condemning the sudden interruption of the Session as a striking departure from established practice, he touches upon the Prime Minister's "dark allusions to the repeal of the Union and the abandonment of the Colonies":—

**Mr. Gladstone's Election Address.**

"Gentlemen, those who endangered the Union with Ireland were the party that maintained there an alien Church, an unjust land law, and franchises inferior to our own; and the true supporters of the Union are those who firmly uphold the supreme authority of Parliament, but exercise that authority to bind the three nations by the indissoluble tie of liberal and equal laws.

"As to the Colonies, Liberal Administrations set free their trade with all the world, gave them popular and responsible government, undertook to defend Canada with the whole strength of the Empire, and organised the great scheme for uniting the several settlements of British North America into one Dominion; to which, when we quitted office in 1866, it only remained for our successors to ask the ready assent of Parliament. It is by these measures that the Colonies have been bound in affection to the Empire; and the authors of them can afford to smile at baseless insinuations."

But the true purpose of Lord Beaconsfield's "baseless insinuations" was to hide the effect of his own acts. "To these I will now begin to draw your attention. With threescore years and ten upon my head I feel the irksomeness of the task. But in such a crisis no man should shrink from calls which his duty may make and his strength allow." At home Ministers had neglected legislation, and aggravated public distress by giving continued shocks to that sense of security which is the life of enterprise. The augmentation of public expenditure, the series of deficits, the sacrifice of the new Sinking Fund, were all noted in turn.

In questions of foreign policy Lord Hartington had concerned himself with material results; he had been more anxious to prove that Lord Beaconsfield had failed in his intentions than that Lord Beaconsfield's intentions had been wrong. "The ascendancy of England has been claimed in circulars but surrendered in secret Conventions." Mr. Gladstone put the whole controversy on a different and a higher level by contrasting Tory pretensions with Liberal aspirations: "The word Ascendancy, gentlemen, is best known to us by its baneful connection with the history of Ireland." How far the Government had justified their so-called ascendancy should be judged from their record:—

"Abroad they have strained, if they have not endangered, the Prerogative by gross

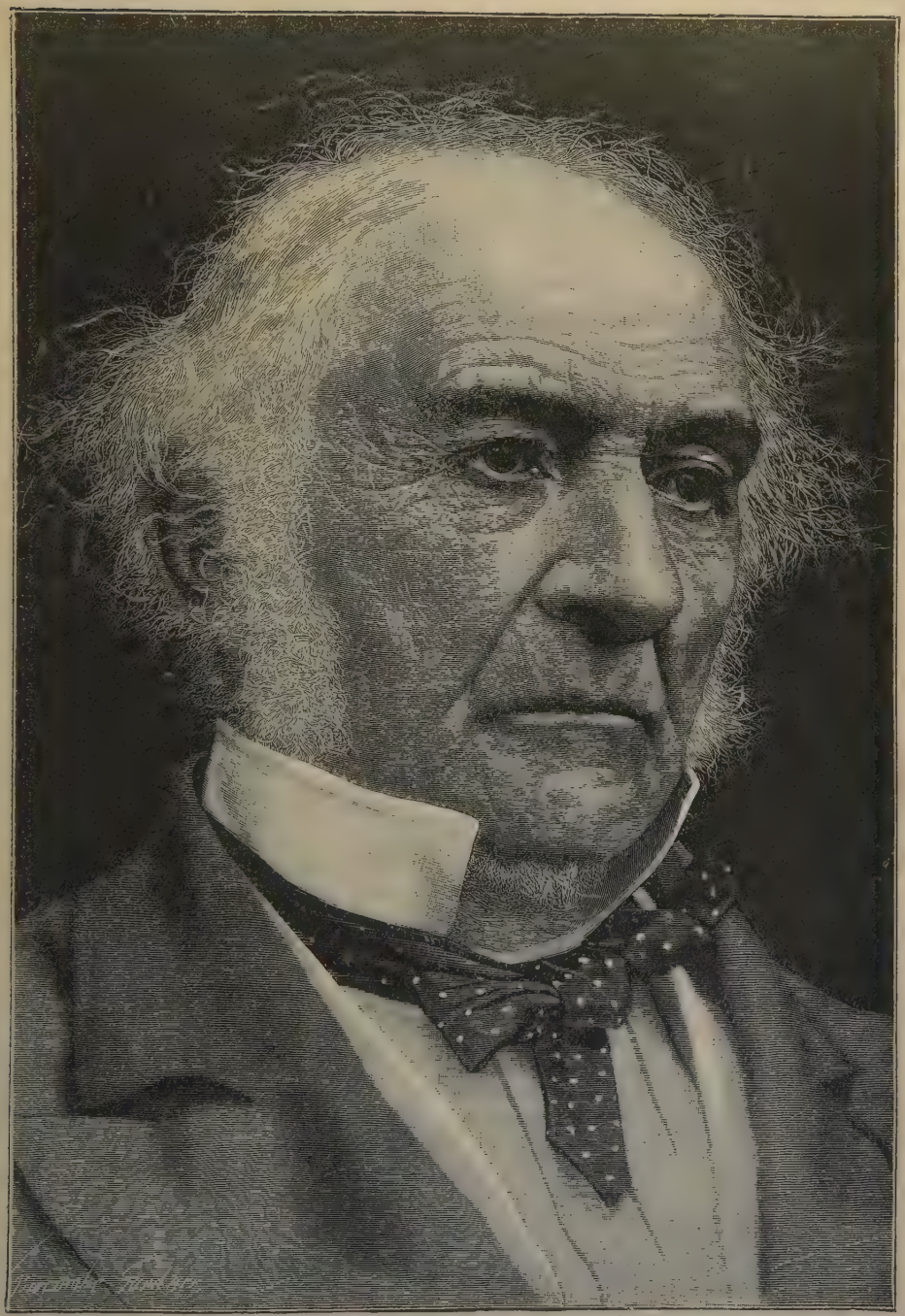


*Photo: Sawyer and Lankester, Regent Street, W.*

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1880.

misuse;* have weakened the Empire by needless wars, unprofitable extensions, and unwise engagements; and have dishonoured it in the eyes of Europe by filching the island of Cyprus from the Porte under a treaty clandestinely concluded in violation of the Treaty of Paris, which formed part of the international law of Christendom.

"If we turn from considerations of principle to material results, they have aggrandised Russia, lured Turkey on to her dismemberment, if not to her ruin, replaced the Christian population of Macedonia under a debasing yoke, and loaded India with the costs and dangers of a prolonged and unjustifiable war."

In reply to Lord Beaconsfield, he would "assert the coequal rights of independent and allied Powers." Yet influence righteously exercised was a legitimate object of ambition for a nation:—

"There is, indeed, an ascendancy in European Councils to which Great Britain might reasonably aspire, by steadily sustaining the character of a Power, no less just than strong, attached to liberty and law, jealous of peace, and therefore opposed to intrigue and aggrandisement from whatever quarter they may come; jealous of honour, and therefore averse to the clandestine engagements which have marked our two latest years."

**Financial Results of the Government's Policy.**

Before the Session closed, the Tory Government had to wind up its accounts in a Budget (March 11th) which—though every asset was dragged to light and every deficit underestimated or denied—still read very much like a statement of liquidation. A summary can give no idea of the complication of accounts. But no amount of financial juggling could conceal a large deficit in the revenue, which had been estimated at £83,055,000, but only realised £80,860,000. The expenditure had been estimated at £81,153,000. But this did not include the charges for the occupation of the Transvaal and other excesses in South Africa, which created a deficit of about £5,000,000. Nor was this the worst. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had on his hands exchequer bonds and other unfunded debt to the extent of about £30,000,000. He hoped for a return of the loan of £2,000,000 to India, and a contribution from South Africa to the expense of the Zulu War.

**Mr. Gladstone's Criticisms.**

Mr. Gladstone did not welcome the policy of exacting Imperial contributions for unnecessary excesses. On the following night, March 12th, he strongly supported a motion of Mr. Fawcett, that it was unjust to defray out of the revenues of India the whole of the expenses of the Afghan War. The main result was clear. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was forced to confess that, after six years of Tory government, the Funded Debt had decreased only from £723,514,000 to £710,490,000; the Terminable Annuities from £51,290,000 to £38,206,000; while the Unfunded Debt had increased from £4,479,000 to £30,855,000—leaving a net *increase* of £268,000. The new Sinking Fund was absorbed by the Government which created it—an act of financial infanticide which Mr. Gladstone treated at length a few days later in one of his Midlothian speeches.† The Government in its desperation had even taken credit to itself for the automatic action of the Terminable Annuities—that is to say, for a process completely independent of the will of the Government.

* *Cf.* the famous letters of "Verax" to the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, in which Lord Beaconsfield's attempt to make the Queen an autocrat and the House of Commons a mere registering body was exposed with great ability.

† Speech at Stow, March 20th, 1880.

On the 16th of March the ex-Premier left King's Cross to enter upon his second Midlothian campaign. It is difficult, if not impossible, to give any adequate idea of the enthusiasm with which Mr. Gladstone could infect audiences of phlegmatic Englishmen and more phlegmatic Scotchmen. Yet it would be absurd to approach the second Midlothian campaign without making some attempt. Fortunately a living and moving picture has been drawn of Mr. Gladstone the orator in the March of this year. On the 12th a meeting was held in Marylebone, the constituency of which he was an elector. The Londoners had been not a little stirred by the latest Ministerial fiasco—a London Water Bill; and even in the metropolis the Government was tottering to its fall. The occasion was not to be forgotten by anyone who had fought his way into the hall. First came the rush and the crush and the resistless sweep onwards; then an hour listening to local nobodies.

The Marylebone Meeting, March, 1880.

"At last there was a cheer and a huge commotion. By mysterious magic a lane was formed, up which, craning my neck, I saw advancing a pale-faced, slim figure, with the head of age and a rapt intense gaze, struggling forward to the platform, followed by a simply clothed woman, who busies herself in warding off the hands of enthusiasts eager to touch him, or pat his back, or help him forward.

"That is Mrs. Gladstone, with the soft face, high-coloured as a girl's, and tremulous mouth; intent on one thing only in this life—her husband. They step up to the platform by a reporter's stool. A dozen willing hands would aid him, but it is hers which grasps his ankle to steady him, lest in his eagerness he slip. He does not sit down, but exchanges a few rapid words with the chairman. She begs a seat immediately behind him. Forth he stands and begins at once: 'Mr. Chairman.' She pulls at his overcoat, and one sleeve comes free. Impatiently he stops while she tugs at the other sleeve, and the coat has scarcely gone from him ere he is flourishing in our faces the free hand: 'Mr. Chairman and Fellow-electors of *Marrilbone*,' for so he called our parish, doubtlessly designedly. Never shall I, an unenthusiastic non-party man, forgot those tones. Surrendering myself to the prevalent sentiment, it seemed to me as if someone had touched the stop of a mysterious organ that searched us through and through. Two more sentences and we were fairly launched upon a sea of passion, regardless of Mrs. Gladstone, who sat behind placidly folding her husband's overcoat. In that torrent of passion the petty politics of the hour figured as huge first principles, and the opinions of the people became as the edicts of eternity. As it went on we became persuaded that the Government, whose resignation was then impending, were the most incompetent set of reprobates that an angry Heaven had ever sent to curse a country. It grew upon us as a marvel why we had not seen this earlier. Why we had lived under such diabolical ineptitude astounded us with a sense of shame; and ever and again was rolled out our patent of nobility, 'Fellow-electors of Marrilbone,' until we became enlarged, quickened, glorified by our fraternity.

"Fellow-Electors of Marrilbone."

"Oh the graces of that speech! 'Gentlemen, this has been a liquid, aqueous Government. You remember what it came in upon?' 'Beer!' we

shouted, and the orator bowed with a gesture of infinite smiling consent. 'And you see what it is going out upon?' 'Water!' we yelled, remembering Mr. Cross's Bill; and again he bowed in acquiescence, like a conjurer who acknowledges the applause that greets the production from the breast-pocket of one of the audience of the watch previously fired from a blunderbuss. In next day's newspaper this passage read: 'Gentlemen, this has been a liquid Government; it came in on beer and will go out on water.' Gladstone never said that: it is but a miserable paraphrase of what was said—of what *we* said. All through a speech of long tortuous sentences he endowed us with a faculty of apprehension we did not know we possessed. And then the peroration: 'You are shortly to pronounce your verdict, you and the people of these isles; and whatever that verdict be, as I hope it will be the true one, I trust it will be clear.' We leaped to our feet and cheered; decidedly we should make it clear. 'I trust it will be emphatic.' We waved our sticks and hats in emphasis. 'I trust it will be decisive, and that it will ring' (here, with a swing of the arm clear round his neck, and a superb uplifting of the whole frame, he sent his trumpet voice into every cranny of the hall till it rang again) 'from John o' Groats to the Land's End,' and a frantic mass of humanity roared themselves hoarse for a full two minutes. When I stood in the free air outside once more, it seemed somewhat unreasoning, all this ecstasy; clearly I had been Gladstonised; and I voted for him at that election."*

It was remarked afterwards that every station on the way north at which there was a stoppage long enough to give time for the delivery of a speech—at Grantham, York, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Berwick—the Liberals gained a seat.

The second Midlothian campaign began on March 17th, with Mr. Gladstone's speech in the Edinburgh Music Hall. It concluded with his speech at West Calder on April 2nd. Speeches were also made at Edinburgh, Corstophine, Ratho, Davidson's Mains, Dalkeith, Juniper Green, Balerno, Penicuik, Loanhead, and other places.

**The Edinburgh Speech.**

The opening speech at Edinburgh will long be preserved as one of the noblest orations in the English language. It begins with a reference to the impropriety of the dissolution; but on that head he will not dilate, because, speaking in the Scottish capital, he is anxious to go straight to the very heart of the matter, "and, amidst the crowd of topics that rush upon the mind," to touch upon those most intimately connected with the great issue, upon the condition, strength, and honour of the Empire and the duty owed it by its citizens."

"For the first time in my life, on the occasion of a General Election, it is attempted by the leaders who are in power, and especially by the very eminent and distinguished man who is the heart and soul and life and centre of the Government, to have this great cause tried, not upon the merits of the Government, but upon the merits of the Opposition. I have never known an instance of that kind before. I have always found that it was considered to be the business of the Opposition to challenge and criticise the Government, and of the country to try the criticisms. But the Government appear to think that that process had better be reversed, and among the long list of

* See the article by Mr. W. L. Watson in the *Outlook*, May 28th, 1898.

innovations which they have introduced, perhaps the latest is this, that it is to be the demerits of the Opposition, not the merits of the Government, which the country is invited to try."

The trick of putting the besiegers into the position of defenders was not likely to impose upon an old campaigner. But Mr. Gladstone could not allow one slander to pass by unnoticed. It had been alleged that if the Liberals were to return to power, they would promptly make an end of all the engagements into which the Beaconsfield Government had entered, and would relieve the country of the consequences of a policy they had opposed and deplored at the expense of its honour and good faith.

"Gentlemen, a more baseless fiction never was conceived in the brain of man, for I suppose it was conceived in the brain—I do not know that there is any other organ that is capable of it—and never was imputed in words by his tongue or by his faculty of speech. We have no power, gentlemen, to relieve you from engagements of honour and good faith entered into by the present Government through a summary process. However we may disapprove them, however we may deplore them, however we have striven to point out—not to you, for you have not had a fair chance yet, but to that majority in the House of Commons which has been perfectly deaf to our arguments—however we may have striven to point out to them the mischiefs and the dangers of the course they were pursuing, we must take the consequences; the country must take the consequences. Prudence, care, diligence, may do much in the course of time; but whatever good faith requires must be accepted and fulfilled."

**Continuity of Foreign Policy.**

Another allegation which was abroad and had to be dealt with was of a slightly different character. It was said that if the Liberals came into power the Manchester School was to rule the destinies of the country:—

"I will endeavour to tell you a portion of the truth upon that subject. What is called the Manchester School has never ruled the foreign policy of this country—never during a Conservative Government, and never especially during a Liberal Government. Do not let me be supposed to speak of what is called the Manchester School, or sometimes the Peace party, as if I were about to cast disrespect upon them. Gentlemen, I respect them even in what I think to be their great and serious error. I think it is, I will venture to say, like many errors in our mixed condition. It is not only a respectable, it is even a noble error. Abhorring all selfishness of policy, friendly to freedom in every country of the earth, attached to the modes of reason, and detesting the ways of force, this Manchester School—this Peace party—has sprung prematurely to the conclusion that wars may be considered as having closed their melancholy and miserable history, and that the affairs of the world may henceforth be conducted by methods more adapted to the dignity of man, more suited both to his strength and to his weakness, less likely to lead him out of the ways of duty, to stimulate his evil passions, to make him guilty before God of inflicting misery on his fellow-creatures. But, gentlemen, no Government of this country could ever accede to the management and control of affairs without finding that that dream of a Paradise upon earth was rudely dispelled by the shock of experience. However we may detest war, and you cannot detest it too much—there is no war, except one, the war for liberty that does not contain in it elements of corruption, as well as of misery, that are deplorable to recollect and to consider; but however deplorable they may be, they are among the necessities of our condition; and there are times when justice, when faith, when the welfare of mankind, require a man not to shrink from the responsibility of undertaking them."

**The Liberals not a Peace-at-any-Price Party.**

But what had the Beaconsfield Government done? They had asked for six millions, in order to maintain the integrity and independence

of the Ottoman Empire. And what had been the result of their policy? Why, the Sultan had neither integrity nor independence. He was liable to interference at any point from every Power which had signed the Treaty of Berlin. With honest and pardonable pride, the great orator reminded his audience of a classic saying:—

"You may remember, gentlemen, that three or four years ago, utter scorn was poured upon what was called the 'bag-and-baggage policy.' Are you aware that that 'bag-and-baggage policy' is at this moment the absolute basis upon which are regulated the whole of the civil state of things in Bulgaria and in Eastern Roumelia? What that policy asked was that every Turkish authority should be marched out of Bulgaria; and every Turkish authority has gone out of Bulgaria. There is not a Turk at this moment who, as a Turk, holds office under the Sultan either in Bulgaria or in Southern Bulgaria, now called Eastern Roumelia. No, not one! The despised 'bag-and-baggage policy' is at this moment the law of Europe. And this is the result of it; and it is for that, gentlemen, that the humble individual who stands before you was held up and reviled as a visionary, an enthusiast, or a verbose, I forget what, although I believe myself that there was not much verbosity in that particular phrase. It appeared to me the people of England understood it well. Nay, more, the Congress of Berlin even seemed to have understood it, and found that the state of things it recommended was a state of things which had become irresistible, and which now, thank God, is irreversibly established in those once unhappy provinces."

**The Bag-and-Baggage Policy.**

The Government of Lord Beaconsfield, it was said, had the backing of several foreign Powers, more particularly of Austria:—

"Did you read in the London papers within the last few weeks an account of the energetic support which they derive from the Emperor of Austria? Did you see that the Emperor of Austria sent for the British Ambassador, Sir Henry Elliot, and told Sir Henry Elliot what a pestilent person he considered a certain Mr. Gladstone, as a man that did not approve of the foreign policy of Austria, and how anxious he was—so the Emperor of Austria was condescendingly pleased to say—that you should all of you give your votes in a way to maintain the Ministry of Lord Beaconsfield?"

**An Indictment of Austria.**

Mr. Gladstone's reply has a touch of Palmerstonian audacity. What was the value of an Austrian testimonial to British foreign policy? He wished to raise no question of internal politics—he heartily wished Austria well in her honest attempts to confront domestic difficulties. But what had been Austria's foreign policy?

"Austria has been the steady, unflinching foe of freedom in every country of Europe. Austria trampled Italy under foot; Austria resisted the unity of Germany; Austria did all she could to prevent the creation of Belgium; Austria never lifted a finger for the regeneration and constitution of Greece. There is not a spot upon the whole map where you can lay your finger and say, 'There Austria did good.' I speak, of course, of its general policy; I speak of its general tendency. I do not abandon the hope of improvement in the future, but we must look to the past and to the present for the guidance of our judgment at this moment; and in the Congress of Berlin, Austria resisted the extension of freedom, and did not promote it. And therefore I say, gentlemen, if you want an Austrian spirit to inspire the counsels of this country, in Heaven's name take the Emperor's counsel and advice."

The Prime Minister had charged the Liberals with being the cause of the difficulties with which the Government was surrounded. Mr. Gladstone pointed out at Corstorphine that Lord Beaconsfield had omitted to blame his opponents for creating difficulties in Africa, though in Africa "he has contrived, without, as far as I am able to judge, the smallest necessity or excuse, to spend five millions of your money in invading a people [the Zulus] who had done

**South Africa.**

him no wrong; and now he is obliged to spend more of your money in establishing the supremacy of the Queen over a community Protestant in religion, Hollanders in origin, vigorous and obstinate and tenacious in character, even as we are ourselves—namely, the Dutchmen of the Transvaal."*

The war in Afghanistan claimed a larger share of attention. Mr. Gladstone spoke of it at Penicuik as "that most unhappy, mischievous, and guilty war which has gone through its first campaign and its second campaign, and is now apparently to pass through its third campaign." He examined it from the point of view of right, of glory, and of expediency. It will suffice to follow him in that part of the indictment to which the first and most commanding place was assigned:— **Afghanistan.**

"I will ask you, gentlemen, what you think of that war in point of right. We made a treaty in 1857 with the Ameer of Afghanistan, in which we bound ourselves not to enforce upon him the presence of a European Resident. And why, gentlemen, was it that the Afghans were so jealous of the presence of a European Resident, which we think innocent enough? Because they were conversant with our practice in India, and because they knew that in India, wherever a European Resident was established, he was not a mere Ambassador, but became the instrument through which the independence of the State was destroyed, and the supremacy of Great Britain over it established. Whatever the Afghans may be, they are freemen like you; they value their freedom as you do; they gave their lives for their freedom as you would give your lives for yours. And though we should have been very glad if they had been willing to receive a European Resident, I, for my part, think that it was a most guilty act, as well as a breach of faith, to force it upon them, more especially when we had it in our power, with their perfect goodwill, to secure, as we did secure, every practical purpose of communication, by sending to them loyal, intelligent, faithful Mohammedan subjects of the British Crown, brethren in religion to the Afghans, able to acquire their confidence, and carrying with them none of the apprehensions that attended the arrival of a European Resident. . . . Is it right, or is it not right, that the government of a country which calls itself Christian, and believes itself civilised, should be carried on upon principles like these? It is for you, gentlemen, to decide. The whole matter has now come into your hands. It is no longer by Ministers; it is no longer by the Parliament—that, I believe, was dissolved this afternoon—that these things will be done. Your approval is to be signified by your votes for the members of the majority—asking to be again returned to Parliament. Your condemnation is to be signified by your returning men who have been in opposition to that majority. So much, gentlemen, for right." †

It will be seen that Mr. Gladstone in his second, as in his first, Midlothian campaign let the stress of his appeal to the country fall upon Foreign Policy. But he did not forget home politics. To the all-embracing subject of finance he devoted much time and energy, remembering, and reminding his hearers, that it was "in a very great degree upon that ground" that Sir Robert Peel "overcame the Liberal Government and came in with his followers, of whom I was one, in the month of September, 1841, with a majority of eighty or ninety at his back."

Nor were social and economic questions altogether neglected. Upon Local Option, upon the growing of strawberries, upon the law of hypothec, upon peasant proprietorship and the fall in the price of wheat he had instructive suggestions to make and opinions to offer. His treatment of the relations of landlord and **Questions of Home Policy.**

* Corstorphine, March 18th, 1880.

† Speech at Penicuik, March 24th, 1880.

tenant in Great Britain marks a distinct advance on the position which he had taken up in the campaign preceding his first Ministry:—

"Gentlemen, I value freedom of contract very much, but in my opinion it should be a real freedom—it should be between parties who meet upon a footing of equality. It would be very absurd if you provided by law that the hosier must sell me a pair of gloves at a certain price. And why? Because when I go into his shop to buy a pair of gloves, he meets me substantially upon a footing of equality. But where the parties do not meet on a footing of equality, there the question of interference with the freedom of contract is one of pure policy and expediency. I am not satisfied that the position of the farmer is one of real equality of footing with the landlord in regard to this question of the Game-laws. It appears to me that there is much to be said for, and I know no sufficient argument against, investing the tenant with a right over the ground game, which right shall be inalienable, and which he shall not be competent to part with."

**The English Farmer.**

The Midlothian orations, and especially those delivered at Edinburgh, Dalkeith, and West Calder, are still worthy of the "reverential contemplation" of every Englishman. It is, alas, impossible to invest them with their proper environment, the voice, the action, the crowds now roaring applause, now hushed in silence, always responsive to the enchanter's hand and voice. Sometimes we catch faint glimpses of the enthusiasm from the bare wording of the speech. Take, for example, the opening sentences of the Dalkeith speech, in which he reminded the electors of the note of confidence which he had struck in the first campaign:—

"Now, gentlemen, nothing has happened during those three months, I hope, to change your minds. Nothing, I assure you, has occurred to alter mine. When I was here in November and December, my heart beat high with expectation that Scotland would discharge her duty when the moment came, and would discharge it in such a manner that the sound of it should ring through England and the world. I have that conviction now; and what I think of Scotland in general, I believe of Midlothian in particular. Nor does a doubt creep into my mind of the issue of this individual contest. Gentlemen, when I urge you to exertion, I hope that I practise what I preach, and I hope you will think that that disposition to practise is found in the members of my family. I do not now speak of my wife, than whom there is not one of you who has a more untiring devotion either to the private interest or to the public cause. But I speak also, gentlemen—I hope you will forgive me for a moment—I speak also of my sons. As I am contending in Scotland, so they are contending in England. Our name has been chosen as the symbol and the rallying-point of the Liberal cause in three counties in this country; and in each of the three, gentlemen, I am glad to say that we appear, not in virtue of any self-seeking intrigue, not in virtue of any gratuitous intrusion, but in answer to the unanimous call of the Liberal party, which has conferred upon us, upon us three, this remarkable honour, and in particular, in answer to the call of the united Liberal party in the metropolitan county of England, which has invited my beloved youngest son to be the champion of the cause, and I think, gentlemen, that they were led into that cause, so honourable to them—so honourable, I think, to us all—because they were infected by the example that you had set."

**The Dalkeith Speech.**

Mr. Gladstone's last speech, at West Calder, was delivered on the 2nd of April, when the first instalment of election results had arrived. With this the great leader closed his campaign, and stood aside to watch with silent triumph the constituencies as they piled up verdict on verdict against the Beaconsfield Administration.

But Mr. Gladstone's candidature was not confined to Midlothian.

March 31. 1880

Gentlemen

It has not been in my power to visit you individually; but you will agree with me that this contest is essentially patriotic; and is lifted far above the level of any question of personal attentions.

At home, we uphold diligent and careful legislation against neglect; economy and prudence against financial disorder; careful regard for the Constitution against invasion of the rights of Parliament and abroad, not, as is absurdly alleged a rule of inaction, but sympathy with freedom, and strict observance of justice and of honour, as the most vital of all British interests.

Before you read these lines, my name may have headed the poll in the great town of Leeds. But however great the honour, it is unsought by me. My position will remain unaltered, and my regard and desire solely directed to the suffrages of Midlothian.

In writing me hither as what you thought a public duty, you Gentlemen have taken a great responsibility upon yourselves. And you will not, I am sure, be satisfied with simply placing the voice of the County on the Liberal side in politics, but will carry the seat with such a telling majority, as shall make the sound of the Midlothian Election ring throughout the land.

I have the honour to be
Gentlemen
Your obliged and
faithful servant
W. E. Gladstone

REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER TO THE ELECTORS OF MIDLOTHIAN.

Although when approached by the Liberals of various large boroughs he had declared, "My selection of a constituency is in the hands of the Liberal Whip in Parliament," the Leeds Liberals had unanimously adopted him, and they persisted without receiving the smallest encouragement. Early in 1878 they had appointed a deputation to inform him that they intended to return him as their representative at the General Election. They asked for no answer: it was an ultimatum. And when Mr. Gladstone, acting on advice, decided to stand for Midlothian, the Leeds Liberals were rather confirmed in their decision; hoping, perhaps, that they might be as fortunate in the election of 1880 as Greenwich had been in that of 1868. Mr. Gladstone held absolutely no communication with Leeds, and the local leaders were forced to make the best of the fight. Nevertheless, in spite of the discouragement and difficulty, which the Tories turned to the best account, he was elected member for Leeds by a majority of 11,291 over the senior Tory candidate. Immediately afterwards he was elected by a majority of 211 over the son of the Duke of Buccleuch in Midlothian, the figures being—

**Adopted by the Leeds Liberals.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Gladstone ... ... | 1,579 |
| Dalkeith ... ... | 1,368 |

Mr. Gladstone, as was expected, decided to sit for Midlothian, and Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who had been beaten in Middlesex, was elected for Leeds.*

The Midlothian poll was the largest on record, and the victory was a seat gained for the Liberals. Mr. Gladstone was dining with Lord Rosebery in George Street, Edinburgh, when the news of the result came; and when they went out on to the balcony the host was at last able to give expression to his delight and enthusiasm:—

"The election is over and I am unmuzzled, and I, as a Midlothian man, can tell you that no Midlothian man, however old he may be, or however long he may have to live, will have spent a prouder night than this. It is a great night for Midlothian; a great night for Scotland; a great night for our county member; a great night for Great Britain; ay, a great night for the world. It has been the fortune of this country to be chosen as the central battle-field of that great contest that is being waged at this moment. In the county of Midlothian has been fought not a battle between Whig and Tory, or Liberal and Conservative, but a battle of Constitutional Government and of oppressed nationalities throughout the world. And what has been the reward of Midlothian now that she has fought this battle? You have fought this battle by and for yourselves, and you are rewarded by having as your county member the foremost man of

* Mr. Gladstone's letter of thanks to the Leeds Liberals may be seen in the library of the Leeds Liberal Club. Early in the October of the following year, when he visited Leeds to return thanks in person, the Prime Minister offered a most ingenious apology to his would-have-been constituents:—"It was, gentlemen, to me a great personal consolation and satisfaction that I was never called upon from the course of circumstances to exercise the option between Leeds and Midlothian, as my seat for both was lost by the acceptance of office before the time came for doing so. But at the same time, gentlemen, I may remind you of what you know as well as I do—why I am Member for Midlothian and not Member for Leeds. The citadel of Toryism in Leeds is not so very strong but that a moderate force might hope to carry it. But that was not the case with reference to the citadel of Toryism in Midlothian. It frowned down upon the county like that old Castle of Edinburgh from the rock that overhangs the city; and the gallant men of that county invited me, and I could not for very shame's sake refuse their invitation, to try and scale the rocks and make ourselves masters of the castle."

AFTER THE DECLARATION OF THE MIDLOTHIAN POLL

Great Britain, the greatest champion of liberty that now lives in the world; and, to use the words of Pitt, I will only say now that I trust Midlothian, having saved herself by her own exertions, will save Great Britain."

Causes of the Liberal Victory.

There were, no doubt, many minor and contributory causes to account for the tremendous Liberal victory of 1880; and of these perhaps the most considerable—as Mr. Chamberlain took care to point out in a letter to the *Times*—was the new organisation popularly known as the Caucus. A marked depression of trade likewise had its effect. But the dominant cause, as everyone felt, was the unexampled success of the agitation which Mr. Gladstone had conducted, at first almost single-handed, against Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy. That agitation had gradually broadened into a general attack upon the bellicose and extravagant Jingoism which had involved the country not only in many perilous and impolitic engagements, but also in a number of petty wars, unnecessary, demoralising, and expensive.

Mr. Gladstone's retirement in 1875 had been perfectly genuine. The Bulgarian Atrocities forced him back into public life, but only as an independent and unofficial Liberal. Each fresh development, in the words of an unfriendly critic, saw Mr. Gladstone, restrained perhaps for a moment by the cautious solicitude of his "responsible" friends, recover himself and press on "to keep ahead of his irresponsible admirers." It is not suggested that Lord Hartington's position was an enviable one. He had accepted the leadership of the Liberal party in the House of Commons in times of depression, when leadership was a thankless task. Elected as a safe man at a not very enthusiastic gathering, he had discharged the functions of Parliamentary opposition in a respectable and meritorious manner. But when the fighting days came, and the battle was transferred from Parliament to the country, he was completely overshadowed. On the Eastern Question Mr. Gladstone did not open his lips in Parliament until nearly the end of the Session of 1876. His next step was a very important one. Its consequences were unmistakable. That Mr. Gladstone felt and pointed them out has not been generally recognised; it will be well, therefore, to quote his own words: "When I was pressed to stand for Midlothian (instead of taking a quiet seat at Edinburgh) I pointed out to Lord Granville, whom I always regarded as the leader of the entire party, that my entering into that contest would force me forward and change my position. But it was still wished that I should stand, and I agreed." *

Lord Hartington's Position.

Mr. Gladstone's.

In the April of 1880, then, the position was this. Mr. Gladstone's pre-eminence, not merely in the Liberal party but in the political world, was unparalleled and almost overpowering. The Hartingtonians, twelve months before a formidable section, had shrivelled into comparative insignificance, and recognised the inevitable.

The chronology of a week may be worth recalling. It is said that Lord Beaconsfield had assured the Queen that there was not the slightest risk of a change of government; and her Majesty went to Baden and stayed there during the Elections. On April the 17th, however, she was

* Letter to Sir Wemyss Reid. V. Magali, St. Raphael, Feb. 1st, 1892.

again at Windsor. On that day the Premier visited her, and only left on the 19th to return on the 21st, after attending his last Cabinet meeting. Meanwhile a false rumour was circulated that Mr. Gladstone felt himself incapable of sustaining the burdens of official life. On the 22nd, in strict conformity with constitutional usage, her Majesty sent for Lord Hartington

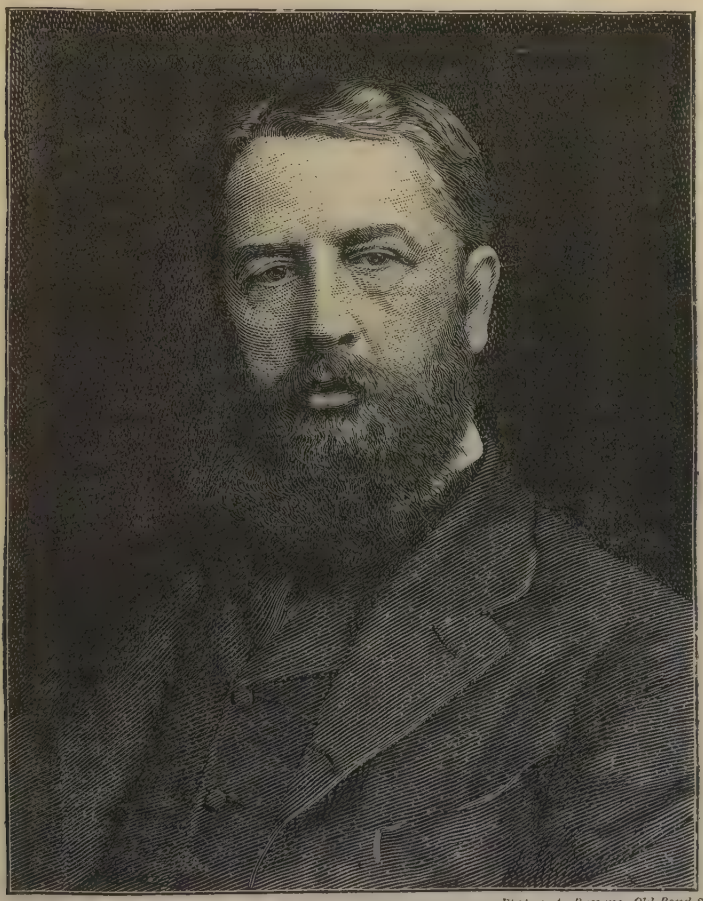


*Photo: A. Bassano, Old Bond Street, W.*

LORD HARTINGTON (DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE) IN THE EARLY 'EIGHTIES.

and asked him to form a Ministry. There is reason for believing that the royal wish was urged with the utmost emphasis. But Mr. Gladstone was the one and only man who could form a Ministry at that moment: and the delay, however correct and constitutional, created much excitement and indignation. It has been asserted, very commonly, that Lord Hartington, out of "loyalty" to Mr. Gladstone, did *not* attempt to form a Ministry. The assertion contains one error of fact and one of feeling. Lord Hartington did not, nor was there much reason why he should, entertain any

feeling of loyalty for Mr. Gladstone. He was still the Liberal leader in the House of Commons; he had only remained in that position because, at the request of the Whips, who did not like to change horses while crossing the stream, he had not insisted on resigning a post which he knew to have been practically vacated in the course of the first Midlothian campaign. He is believed to have represented to the Queen that it would be impossible for him to form an Administration while Mr. Gladstone, who commanded all that was militant and victorious in the Liberal Party, remained a private member in the terrible character of Free Lance and Candid Friend, like a Cromwell in the army of an Essex. At her Majesty's bidding, Lord Hartington, that same evening, called on Mr. Gladstone and asked whether he would be willing to take office in a Hartingtonian Administration. The reply was brief and discouraging. No amount of intrigue—and Lord Hartington was no intriguer—could have formed a Liberal Administration without the victor of Midlothian; and the victor chose to be "aut Cæsar aut nullus."

Lord Hartington and the Formation of a Ministry.

On the 23rd of April, Lord Hartington and Lord Granville, having visited the Queen together, returned to London in the afternoon and sought out Mr. Gladstone. They found him "buttoned to the chin." The Cabinet was forming in his mind; Bradshaw was lying on the table. Before dinner-time the veteran statesman had kissed hands on his appointment as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was Prime Minister of England for the second time. In five days the Cabinet was finally constituted. It was a Cabinet representing all sections of the party, from the followers of the Duke of Argyll to those of Mr. Chamberlain. The *Times*, which had to accommodate itself with unusual rapidity to the swing of the pendulum, consoled itself for the admission of Radicals by the large company of moderate men who had been included in the Cabinet. In their society Mr. Bright might be expected to be reasonable in urging his peculiar views, "and even the admission of a younger and more advanced Liberal to the circle need excite no anxiety."

The New Administration.

Outside the Cabinet the most important appointment by far was that of Lord Ripon to be Viceroy of India. It was necessary that the post should change hands simultaneously with the change of Ministry; and the Indian taxpayer even more than the consumer of fiction demanded the immediate reversion of Lord Lytton from the ranks of villainously bad administrators to those of mediocre novelists. The guilt of the Afghan War had been enhanced by an extravagant outlay; and the extravagance itself had been aggravated by a scandalous *suppressio veri* on the eve of an appeal to the country.

Lord Ripon sent to India.

Mr. Gladstone's sensational return to power produced a great impression in Europe, and the French journals in particular distinguished themselves by picturesque sketches in which the warmth of colouring that attaches to a personal monograph was acquired at the expense of accuracy. The following, from the pen of "Ignotus," appeared in the *Figaro* of April 21st. It shows that the development of a Gladstone myth was not a monopoly of the Turkish Press.*

* See page 624.

"His father, a Scotchman, was a corn merchant, and afterwards a ship-owner at Liverpool. The King knighted him. The son has not inherited the title. He has preferred to remain one of the people. His first Budget Speech was not only applauded by the usual hear, hear, but also by stamping of feet. When in office he is Conservative and *with the Catholics*, when in opposition he is Liberal and is *against the Catholics*. In retirement, Mr. Gladstone leads the life of a gentleman farmer. He rises early and is very abstemious. He chiefly eats fish, because the diet stimulates the brain. He takes two glasses of Bordeaux, because that wine is a tonic of the cervical matter. He takes one glass of port, because that is the orator's wine. Mr. Gladstone, it will be seen, is logical even in his *modus vivendi*. On Sundays he reads the lessons of the Presbyterian rite at church. People go from five leagues to hear his fine sonorous voice. Afterwards he puts on his stout wooden-soled boots, with nails as big as those of old church doors, takes his axe, and the ex-Premier becomes a wood-cutter." **A French Portrait.**

With the exception of the Turkish Government, none was more discomposed by the change of Ministry in England than that of Austria. A correspondent of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* asserted that after his return from Midlothian, Mr. Gladstone had granted him an interview, and had spoken as follows:— **Feeling in Austria.**

"The liberated Slavic men should have an opportunity to build up a future for themselves, and their territory must not be annexed by others. Whosoever understands the meaning of the English phrase 'Hands off!' will be able to understand my line of policy. What I stated in regard to the Eastern Question and the policy followed by Austria, I was in duty bound to state. I am the watchful dog that barks. A good watch-dog is bound to do his duty. I do not permit dust to be thrown up. Matters may take another turn—that is possible—but I repeat, I am the watchful dog that barks." Shortly afterwards a representative of the *Neue Freie Presse* waited upon Mr. Gladstone and begged to know whether he would permit Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia to be joined, and whether he considered the settlement of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be permanent. Mr. Gladstone would only refer him to the famous speech at West Calder (November 27th, 1879), in which he had laid it down, subject to five limitations, that "the foreign policy of England should always be inspired by the love of freedom." In the debate on the Address, Mr. Gladstone was more explicit; though there, no doubt, he was mainly concerned to demolish the idea circulated by unscrupulous enemies that he intended to break out with some brand-new and revolutionary policy:—

"We do not desire to see foreign influences established in Turkey. . . . I never proposed the abolition of the authority of the Sultan, either as Suzerain or as Sultan, in any part of his dominions. I proposed undoubtedly that Turkish administration should cease in certain provinces—and it has ceased there; but I believe, if we could solve the difficult problem of establishing a relation between the Sultan and his subjects conducive to and consistent with the full development of their prosperity, with the enjoyment of local liberties, and with the control of their strictly local affairs, then that supremacy of the Sultan may even come to play a useful part in the exclusion of other influences from abroad, from whatever quarter derived, which would lead to rivalry, jealousy, and possible hostility."

By this time a reconciliation had been effected with the Emperor of Austria through the Austrian ambassador. Apparently the Emperor explained away the unwise language attributed to him at the time of the Elections, and declared that Austria would co-operate loyally in the

execution of the Berlin Treaty. Mr. Gladstone thereupon wrote a friendly letter, "refusing to defend in argument terms of censure which he could now banish from his mind." This the Austrian Emperor felt to be "the letter of an English gentleman." Not so Lord Salisbury, who agreed with Lord George Hamilton that the apology was "shameful and humiliating," and then proceeded to express surprise that Austria was satisfied with it, seeing that "it only promised, in recognition of the assurance given him by Count Karolyi that Austria did not desire to advance beyond where she now stood, that he would not renew the accusation." It need hardly be pointed out that this patriotic attempt to spoil the relations between Austria and Great Britain fell into two parts, which were mutually destructive. Nevertheless many Liberals felt that Mr. Gladstone's "apology" had gone further than was necessary.

Reconciliation with the Emperor of Austria.

One of the first duties which devolved upon the Government was the settlement of the Eastern Question. The clauses of the Treaty of Berlin had not yet been executed. When Lord Beaconsfield left office, none of the promised reforms had been carried out in Turkey. Armenia was infested by Kurds. If the condition of Servia was improving, Bulgaria was still lawless and unsettled. But there were, as Mr. Gladstone explained in the debate on the Address, two practical questions which were so critical that they evidently required immediate treatment by someone who, not merely in an official sense, but in the strictest manner might represent the views of the Government. One, relating to the frontier of Greece, was undoubtedly urgent, still more so the other, which related to the southern frontier of Montenegro: "This question is in a state so critical that we are not absolutely secure even of the maintenance of peace. It is complicated by a variety of difficulties, and we feel the greatest anxiety with regard to it, and we have taken all the means in our power to promote its rapid solution on the basis of the European Concert."

Dealing with the Eastern Question.

Accordingly, Sir Henry Layard, our Turcophile Ambassador at Constantinople, was superseded by an Ambassador Extraordinary, in the person of Mr. Goschen, in order that her Majesty's Ministers might be represented at the Porte by a statesman with whom they had long been "in intimate and confidential communication," and with whom, on the whole of the problems involved in the Eastern Question, they were "in the most complete concurrence."

Montenegro, which had been "sketched" by Mr. Gladstone, and sung by Lord Tennyson in the *Nineteenth Century* for May, 1877, was perhaps the only purely military community which succeeded in drawing upon itself the full current of the Premier's sympathies. He was pledged to secure it, not only from the Turk, but from all foreign domination. "No Russian or Austrian eagle will build its nest in the Black Mountain." And he was determined, not only to maintain the independence of Montenegro, but also to enlarge and consolidate its territory. By the Treaty of Berlin the Porte was to cede to Montenegro Gussinje and Plava; but the Mahommedan inhabitants, on receiving notification, formed an Albanian League, which was secretly fostered by the Porte; and the "Corti compromise," by which the Christian territory of Podgoritza was offered instead, only made the

Montenegro.

League more formidable than ever, till at last it began to enlist recruits and levy taxes throughout the villayets of Janina, Kossovo, and Scutari, and the adjacent territories, maintaining meanwhile the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan, and protesting, in the name of the Albanian nation, against any cession of Albanian territory to Montenegro or Greece. The resources of Turkish civilisation were not exhausted; and the Porte began to intrench itself in its most impregnable Plevna, the Plevna of dilatory protests and "unavoidable" diplomatic delays.

DULCIGNO.

On June 11th, the Powers, following Great Britain under Gladstone, presented a joint note to the Porte demanding the introduction of reforms into Armenia and an immediate settlement of the Montenegrin frontier, and informing the Porte that a commission had been appointed to delimit the Turco-Greek boundary. The Sublime Porte, alarmed and disturbed, began to assert its sincerity and dismiss its Ministers. Then came a war scare. Turkey began to collect stores, sent one Pasha to repair the Dardanelles forts and another to mobilise the 2nd Army Corps at Adrianople. When the excitement subsided the ambassadors sent another note complaining of the delay, but with an important postscript that the Porte might settle the Montenegrin claims by ceding Dulcigno. To this the Porte (after shedding another Minister) replied with an expression of its fervent desire but absolute inability to coerce its Albanian subjects. On August 3rd the Powers invited the Porte to put an end to the Montenegrin question, either by agreeing to the "Corti compromise," or by joining the Powers in helping Montenegro to take Dulcigno. At last, on August

**England Leads the Way.**

19th, the Porte consented to the principle of surrendering Dulcigno. But it would take no part in coercing the Albanians.

The Powers thereupon agreed to coerce. A *protocole de désintéressement* was signed. No troops were to be landed; but ironclads were to "demonstrate" under Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour.

**A Naval Demonstration, 1880.**

On September 14th the ironclads assembled at Gravosa. Then the Turkish Government issued another circular, and there was more delay: but suddenly, on October 12th, the Porte announced that in order to give a new proof of its loyalty and goodwill to the Powers it would direct the local authorities to cede Dulcigno to Montenegro. The submission was explained on the Continent by the theory that France and Germany had promised that the cession of Dulcigno would end the naval demonstration. The true explanation is that Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville were prepared to give orders to the fleet to occupy Smyrna. The submission was completed. At the end of November Dervish Pasha marched to Dulcigno and handed over the town; on the 5th of December the fleet, having effected its purpose, left the Turkish coast. Mr. Gladstone's tenacity had saved the situation. Nine months of patient and firm diplomacy had brought honour to Great Britain, tranquillity to Europe, and an important extension of liberty in the Balkan peninsula.

**Dulcigno Surrenders.**

The Session of 1880, opened at the end of April, was marked by the beginning of a personal incident which affected Mr. Gladstone deeply. The constituency of Northampton elected in Mr. Bradlaugh a member who described himself frankly and truthfully as "a propagandist of Atheism." At the swearing in of members Mr. Bradlaugh presented a claim to be allowed to affirm under the Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866, and the amending Acts, instead of taking the oath. The Speaker declining to adjudicate, a Select Committee was agreed upon, after a discussion in which the Fourth Party began to take shape, its members making themselves conspicuous by an attack upon religious toleration, in alliance with the Home Rulers. The Select Committee, by a majority of one, reported against allowing Mr. Bradlaugh to affirm. On finding that it was likely that he would not be allowed to affirm, Mr. Bradlaugh suddenly announced that on May 21st he would present himself in the House to take the oath, in accordance with the spirit, not of the oath, but of the affirmation. Sir H. Drummond Wolff interposed, and was seconded by an alderman who presented a petition extensively signed in the City, praying that no one who denied the existence of a God should be enabled to sit in Parliament. Mr. Gladstone intervened, and after ingeniously casting many doubts upon the competence of the House to interfere with a member fulfilling his statutory duty, proposed that as they were treading on such delicate ground another Select Committee should be appointed. The motion was carried in spite of the Fourth Party and the Irishmen; and the Committee reported that Mr. Bradlaugh should not be allowed to take the oath, but that he might be allowed to affirm at his own risk. On June 21st Mr. Labouchere moved a Resolution to this effect, but it was met by an amendment that Mr. Bradlaugh be not permitted either to affirm or to take the oath. This elicited one of the finest

**The Bradlaugh Difficulty.**

of Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary speeches, in which wisdom is drawn out by casuistry and religious feeling tempered by constitutional lore. A popular assembly, he said, accustomed in its debates to use feeling as the minister of reason, had anything but a high qualification for dealing with a matter which ought to be viewed in the driest light of reason, and in no other light whatsoever. He went on to contrast the success of the House of Commons in its ancient struggles against the Crown and its recent struggles against the House of Lords with the issue of the Wilkes controversy, where it was foolish enough to range itself against the people of the country as represented by a single constituency—a constituency numerically smaller than Northampton. The House entered into that struggle with great confidence, but ended by expunging its own Resolutions. So far the Prime Minister had been wonderfully effective and convincing; but when he passed to the more delicate ground of religion his eloquence attained a far higher flight. He desired to "reason with honourable gentlemen in regard to the religious impulses to which they were giving way." Let them consider what exactly was the position which they were about to take up. The passage which follows may fairly be regarded as the final triumph of the critic over the author of "The State in its Relations to the Church":—

**Macaulay's Triumph.**

"The House was exhorted from the beginning of last century down to 1828 to rally in defence of what I may call its Church constitution, because *de jure* until 1828 it was composed of members who had, or who were in law assumed to have, qualified themselves by the most solemn act of communion to sit here as members of the Church of England. The House was rallied by that call. It was certainly a doctrine perfectly clear and perfectly consistent; and most dismal were the vaticinations as to the effect on the religious character of the House unless that call were obeyed. In that year, however, the Test and Corporation Acts were finally repealed, and then came a new rally of the House on religious grounds. They were next called to rally, not on the Church constitution of the House, but on behalf of the Protestant Church. In the face of the same threats and the same doleful lamentations, the Protestant constitution of the House was given up, and the Roman Catholics were admitted on a footing of equality, and took their seats in the House, many precious years of the nation's life having been angrily spent in the attempt to maintain their exclusion. Having got to the Protestant constitution of the House, you had not escaped from the religious war. There was now a fresh cry raised for the Christian constitution of the House; and it was contended that nothing could be so injurious or destructive to the character of the House as the admission of the Jews. For thirty years, I think, this controversy raged, and then it was closed by Jewish emancipation, if indeed it is quite closed, because I am under the impression that even at this moment another branch of the Legislature reserves for decision within its own discretion the question whether this or that particular Jew shall be allowed to take his seat upon its benches. Here, however, we meet, Jews included, on a footing of perfect equality; and now, Sir, as was justly and truly said . . . last night, we are invited to make what I suppose is a final rally for the Theistic constitution of the House. You have been driven from the Church ground, driven from the Protestant ground, driven from the Christian ground; and the final rally is made upon this narrow ledge of the Theistic ground. Well, whether it is a narrow ledge or not, you have given up your Church, your Protestantism, your Christianity. You are outside of them altogether, and you are standing on what ground remains to you outside of them. What is that ground? How was it described by the mover of the amendment? The mover of the amendment said he would have been most happy if Mr. Bradlaugh had come to this table and had taken the oath of affirmation without making any declaration upon this subject. Did the hon. and learned gentleman then obtain his first information about Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions when Mr. Bradlaugh

made his claim to make the affirmation? Was there any fact in England more notorious than the fact of Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions? Therefore see whether your ground is narrow or not. You are now taking your stand for Theism in a definite and dogmatic form. You are declaring your willingness that an Atheist should sit here, provided that he had not told you what he was in the course of some of the proceedings of the House. Surely, Sir, it is a very narrow ground. The form of actual Atheism is, so far as I know, a rare form of unbelief in this country. The forms which abound are forms of what are called Positivism, Agnosticism, Materialism, and Pantheism. You are not taking objection to any of these forms. I do not understand you to say that if any gentleman published in every newspaper in London, on the morning that he was going to take the oath, a declaration that he was a Pantheist, an Agnostic, or anything else, there would be any reason why he should not take his seat in this House. That makes good what I say, that the religious ground on which we stand is a narrow and slippery ground. For my own part, I see no profit or advantage, either to charity or to reason or to common sense, in taking distinctions of this kind. Under your principles, as I understand them, you would allow a Mahometan to sit in this House without the least question. You would probably allow a Parsee; but you could not, with any consistency, allow a Buddhist."

But the appeal was unavailing; the amendment was carried by 275 to 230. This was on June 22nd. On the day following, when Mr. Bradlaugh again claimed the right to take the oath, he was ordered to withdraw. This he declined to do, and thereupon, at the instance of Sir Stafford Northcote, he was taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms and removed from the House and confined in the Clock Tower. Next day, also on the motion of the leader of the Opposition, he was released; and Northcote's action was further stultified on July 1st, when a Resolution was moved by the Premier and passed, to permit all persons whom the law allowed to make affirmation instead of oath, to do so on taking their seats, subject to any statutory liability. Mr. Bradlaugh then made the affirmation and took his seat; and so far as the House of Commons was concerned, the question, though destined to revive, was for the time being settled. The speech which Mr. Bradlaugh made on the 23rd of June was afterwards described by Mr. Gladstone, in conversation, as "consummate."

**A Good Session's Work, 1880.**

It must not be imagined, however, that the House of Commons was engaged in ploughing the sands. The affirmation fury was only a collateral incident to what was upon the whole a business-like Session. Reviewing his work three years later, Mr. Gladstone took credit for the Session of 1880. The Conservative legacy might, he thought, be divided into three parts. The first consisted of an enormous legislative arrear. Secondly there was an amount of embarrassment and complication and even risk in foreign countries, and in our own transmarine possessions, such as had never been handed over at any modern period of English history by one Government to another. Lastly the finances of the country were in a state of habitual deficiency. So far as legislation was concerned, the Liberal Government, with only half a Session to dispose of, made a useful if not exactly a brilliant beginning.* The Employers' Liability Bill, the Ground Game Bill, and the Burials Bill were all necessary and important reforms; and in spite of the House of Lords, which was degenerating into a mere wing of the Carlton Club, they all

* *Cf.* speech by Mr. Gladstone at the inaugural banquet of the National Liberal Club, May 2nd, 1883, on the Conservative legacy and Liberal work.

passed into law. Mr. Gladstone found means to abolish the Malt Duty, the loss of revenue being made up by the imposition of a penny in the income tax and by a duty of 6s. 3d. per barrel upon beer.

But as the Session went on it became obvious that Ireland would be the thorn in the side of the new Government. Mr. Gladstone was not prepared for immediate legislation; and Mr. O'Connor Power's amendment on the Address, demanding urgency for the Irish Land

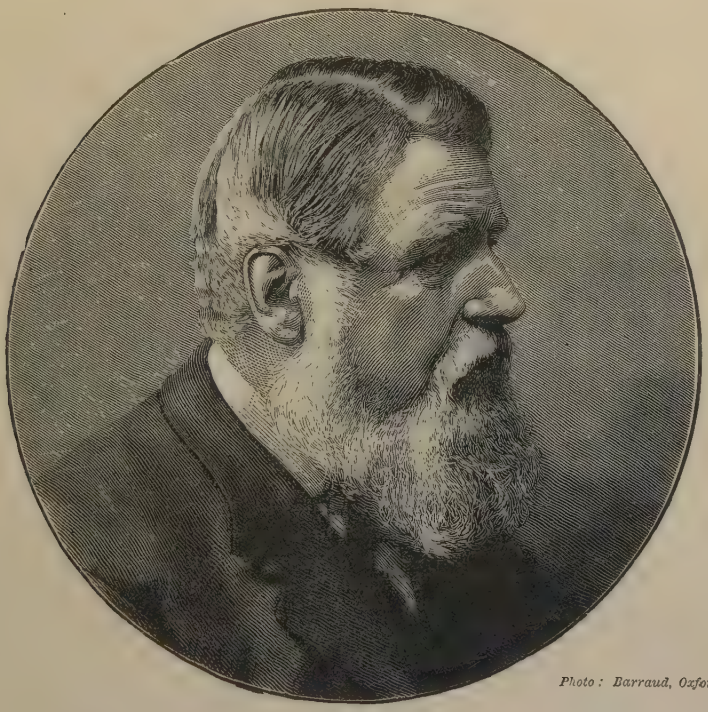


*Photo: Barraud, Oxford Street, W.*

SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE (FIRST EARL OF IDDESLEIGH) IN THE 'EIGHTIES.

Question, was thrown out by a huge majority. But the distress was becoming acute, and a small Relief Bill was passed. Unfortunately this was altogether insufficient. Evictions were increasing with alarming rapidity, and Mr. Forster, therefore, introduced the Compensation for Disturbance Bill* in order to restrain a power which the landlords were abusing with consequences dangerous to public security. A short Bill of thirty-five lines, it encountered strenuous and bitter opposition. Lord Randolph

**Ireland Coming to the Front.**

* "Mr. Forster's vigorous conduct in bringing forward this timely and necessary Bill affords ample proof of the honesty, disinterestedness, and public spirit with which he set out upon his unfortunate Chief Secretaryship." So wrote Mr. Gladstone in a criticism of Sir Wemyss Reid's Life of Forster. "When in 1880 he was believed to have made the Irish Office the object of his choice, such a selection was certainly due not

Churchill, Mr. Chaplin, and all the young bloods of the Tory party heralded this measure as the beginning of a campaign against the landlords. The desire to embarrass the Government prevailed with some, a baser consideration with others. In truth, the Government had been, as Mr. Gladstone said, at great pains to secure that a measure demanded by strong necessity, and carefully adapted and limited to that necessity, should not establish a dangerous precedent. They had been careful so to frame it that it should not deprive the landlord of the power of enforcing payment of rent due. What the Bill really restrained, and that only temporarily, was the Irish landlord's power of eviction, a power conferred upon him by comparatively recent Acts, and conferred upon him certainly without any reference to, and it might almost be said without any consideration of, the Irish occupier.

**Compensation for Disturbance Bill, 1880.**

The Third Reading was carried at last, on the 26th of July; but Lord Beaconsfield opposed the Bill in the House of Lords, and it was thrown out on the Second Reading by 282 votes to 51. The results were disastrous. The Irish peasant became hopeless, desperate, and lawless. Agrarian misery was followed by agrarian outrage. It was perhaps the most enormous of all the sins which the House of Landlords has committed from a short-sighted care for the rentals of its members. "I remember," writes Mr. Justin McCarthy, "speaking in the House of Commons some time during the earlier period of Mr. Gladstone's Administration, and declaring my conviction that the action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was the fountain and origin of all the agrarian trouble then going on in Ireland. I shall never forget how Mr. Gladstone, seated on the Treasury bench, leaning across the table, with flashing eyes and earnest gestures, called 'Hear! Hear! Hear!' to my declaration."

**Thrown out by the Lords.**

At this time the Conservative party was weak and disorganised. There was a good deal of insubordination below the gangway. The amiable and steady-going leaders on the Front Opposition bench were surprised and pained by the discovery that they were not giving satisfaction to younger and more pushing members of the party. These free-lances readily allied, when occasion served, with the Irish members, or with any other section that promised to create a disturbance, to obstruct, delay, or in any manner embarrass the Government. The strain was too great for Mr. Gladstone's health and temper. On the 14th of June Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, an Irish member, had put in the form of a question a string of false statements about the antecedents of M. Challemel-Lacour, the new French ambassador. Sir Charles Dilke, replying for the Government, expressed

**The Challemel-Lacour Incident, 1880.**

to personal ambition, but to an honourable desire and perhaps an over-sanguine expectation to be enabled to labour alike for the promotion of the national well-being of the people and for the extension of their local liberties. Nor can anyone say with justice that he did not work consistently, and even eagerly, within the lines which he had laid down for himself. It was, therefore, a sad irony of Fortune which first threw him into sharper collision than any of his predecessors with the sentiment of the Irish people, which made his administration among the least successful periods of his life, and which finally ordained that the last of his political utterances should be the announcement of a keen resistance to their 'national aspirations.'"

his regret at the offensive interpellation. This did not satisfy Mr. O'Donnell. He began to make a speech, but was checked by the Speaker. Still he persevered. At last Mr. Gladstone rose to order, and moved that Mr. O'Donnell be not heard. Such a motion, according to the Speaker, had not been made in the House of Commons for 200 years, and after a long debate it was withdrawn, on Mr. O'Donnell consenting to give notice of his intended motion. It was perhaps the least constitutional proposal ever put forward by Mr. Gladstone in Parliament.

As the Session proceeded the difficulty of carrying on Parliamentary business became greater and greater. At last, at the end of July, the Premier broke down. On the 31st he was muffled up and about to start for a Cabinet Council when Dr. Clark stopped him and sent him to bed, finding that his temperature was at 103. In the course of a week he began to recover; and in ten days' time was well enough to pay a visit to his old friend the Dean of Windsor. On August 15th he left town for Holmbury in Surrey, the seat of Mr. F. Leveson-Gower; and at the end of August, as guests of their friend Sir Donald Currie, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone took a voyage round the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland in Sir Donald's vessel, the *Grantully Castle*. At the different points where they touched, the Premier was able to make little speeches, and when he returned from what he described as "a sanatory and not a political tour" his health was completely restored.

**A Temporary Breakdown.**

**On Board the "Grantully Castle."**

During the leader's convalescence Lord Hartington and the rest of the Ministers were fighting their way through the remainder of the Session amid scenes of organised disorder and concerted anarchy. The Home Rulers, already practically under the leadership of Mr. Parnell, delayed for days the vote for the Royal Irish Constabulary. The relations between the Irishmen and Mr. Forster grew steadily worse. And this friction undoubtedly enhanced the difficulties of the Government. When at last the Session came to an end, the struggle which had been waged in the House of Commons was carried across the Irish Channel; and Mr. Forster, a strong and resolute administrator, found himself face to face with Mr. Parnell.

Without doubt Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy in 1880, as in 1868, was a policy of constructive social legislation. On those terms, and with that intention, Mr. Forster took office. Hence too the appointment in June of a Commission to inquire into the working of the Irish Land Act of 1870, and the introduction of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. But the action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Compensation for Disturbance Bill precipitated a crisis. The Irish people were in a dangerous mood. They had found a strong leader who did not scruple to declare war upon government from Downing Street and Dublin Castle. Agrarian outrages began to increase in number. Evictions were followed by murders. Juries refused to convict. A pastoral letter of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, condemning in unmeasured terms all who instigated or condoned outrage, only exasperated the peasantry; and so strong was the current of the national feeling that many bishops, and the great majority of the priests—who had stood aloof from the Fenian movement—joined the

**Ireland: A State of War.**

popular side. In September Mr. Parnell explained and defended boycotting. It was, he said, better than shooting, as being "a more Christian and charitable way" of dealing with a tenant who bid for a farm from which his neighbour had been evicted; for it would give the lost sinner an opportunity of repenting. Unfortunately, the boycott did not prevent murder. In October, 1880, it was found necessary to proclaim Galway as a disturbed district. At the beginning of November, fourteen prominent members of the Land League, including Mr. Parnell and several other members of Parliament, were indicted.

Boycotting.

On the 9th of November, at the Lord Mayor's Banquet, the Prime Minister referred at some length to the crisis. The abundance of the harvest in Ireland might have been expected to produce a social improvement by diminishing those sufferings which twelve months before "went far to account for whatever might be observed of uneasiness, and even of disorder, in the state and conduct of that people." But Ministers had been disappointed:—

"Other influences have come upon the scene—some of them, perhaps, legitimate, others, more questionable, have been pressed on our view by means that cannot for a moment pretend to be legitimate, and are incompatible with the first conditions of a well-constituted society. I allude to a party which has long sought to associate its political history with the reform and improvement of the law; but there is one thought anterior to the reform and improvement of the law, and that is the maintenance of public order."*

On December 13th a Cabinet Council was hastily summoned. The increase of outrages in Ireland had convinced the Chief Secretary that a strong Coercion Act was necessary to enable the Government to preserve life and secure property, and it was decided that this Bill should precede—but not supersede—land legislation.

Even in those dark and menacing days Mr. Gladstone's courageous optimism and unbounded belief in himself and in the efficacy of that remedial legislation which he kept steadily in view, never deserted him. Nor had the Premier lost the confidence of the extreme section of his party; for on January 12th, 1881, a small deputation of Radicals, with Irish Home Rulers who were not followers of Mr. Parnell, came to him and presented a memorial in favour of the three F's—Free sale, Fair rent, and Fixity of tenure,† with special emphasis on the last. Parliament had been opened on January 7th. The Queen's Speech touched on the settlement of the Montenegrin frontier and the difficulties still remaining about that of Greece, on a rising in the Transvaal which had postponed plans "for securing the European settlers full control over their own local affairs," on the unfortunate prolongation of a war in Basutoland, and on the determination of her Majesty's Government that the occupation of Candahar should not be permanently maintained. But the most important part of the

The Queen's Speech, 1881.

* In the same speech Mr. Gladstone addressed himself to foreign questions, and found reason for satisfaction, not only in connection with Montenegro, but also in connection with Afghanistan, where, since General Roberts's great march to Candahar, they had been able to diminish by between 20,000 and 30,000 the enormous force which had been engaged in military operations.

† "Fraud, Force, and Folly" was the Tory interpretation.

Speech was reserved for the alarming developments in the social condition of Ireland :—

"In a state of things new in some important respects, and hence with little of available guidance from former precedent, I have deemed it right steadily to put in use the ordinary powers of the law before making any new demand. But a demonstration of their inefficiency, amply supplied by the present circumstances of the country, leads me now to apprise you that proposals will be immediately submitted to you for intrusting me with additional power, necessary, in my judgment, not only for the vindication of order and public law, but likewise to secure on behalf of my subjects protection for life and property and personal liberty of action."

**Coercion for Ireland.**

The debate which followed was hot and prolonged. Lord Randolph Churchill complained that the Government had failed to pack their jury at the State trial in Dublin, at which Mr. Parnell and his associates were about to be acquitted. Mr. Charles Russell* contended that the aims and methods of the Land League were perfectly legal. Mr. Parnell, soon to be dubbed by the fair members of the Ladies' Land League "the uncrowned king of Ireland," and according to Mr. Plunket "the most immoral politician since Jack Cade," declared that if a fair chance of success presented itself "it was the duty of every Christian to shed his blood for his country."

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL IN 1881.

At last the debate on the Address was brought to a conclusion, and on the 24th of January Mr. Forster introduced the Protection of Persons and Property Bill, which provided that the Lord Lieutenant might put and keep in prison until September 30th, 1882, any person reasonably suspected of agrarian or treasonable offences. On the next day Mr. Gladstone carried a Resolution to give precedence to the Bill. A twenty-two hours' sitting followed, in the course of which Mr. Biggar was suspended. On the 27th and 28th denunciations of the Land League by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright still further inflamed the passions of the Irish. On the last day of the month a forty-one hours' sitting began, which proved conclusively that the rules of procedure, which had been amended in 1880 to give the Speaker power to "name" members, were still hopelessly inadequate. A nine days' debate on the Address, a twenty-two hours' sitting on the motion to give precedence to the Coercion Bill, and a five days' debate on leave to bring it in, had culminated in a forty-one hours' sitting! It was obviously necessary to resort to new tactics. The "clôture," as it was called, began to be discussed favourably in the Press; and Professor Thorold Rogers distinguished himself in a hunt for precedents. †

**The Coercion Bill introduced, 1881.**

* Now Lord Russell of Killowen.

† The backward search ended triumphantly with some entries in the Commons Journals for 1610 and 1604.

At last Speaker Brand, holding that the Bill had been wilfully obstructed, declared his determination to put the question without further debate, and this was done, the Nationalists shouting out "Privilege" and leaving the House in a body. The motion for leave to bring in the Coercion Bill was carried without dissent.

The Closure.

The next day (the 3rd of February), Mr. Gladstone rose to move the adoption of an urgency rule framed to enable Ministers to expedite public business. But he had no sooner risen to propose his Resolution than Mr. Dillon got up and persistently interrupted, until at last he was named by the Speaker and removed from the House by the Sergeant-at-arms. Mr. Gladstone again rose, but was again interrupted by two Irish members. The Speaker intervened: "The right hon. gentleman is in possession of the House, and is entitled to proceed without interruption."

Mr. Parnell: "I beg to move that the right hon. gentleman be no further heard." (Cries of "Name him! name him!")

From this point indescribable confusion prevailed. The Speaker having declared that he was prepared to put into operation the Standing Order dealing with wilful and persistent obstruction, Mr. Gladstone again attempted to proceed. Mr. Parnell again rose, insisting on his right to move that the Prime Minister be no further heard, in accordance with the precedent created by the Premier himself in the previous Session. By a long and painful process, Mr. Parnell and nearly forty rebellious Irish members were suspended from the service of the House during the remainder of that day's sitting. At last, when Mr. Gladstone was able to resume, he proceeded as if nothing had happened. He would avoid, he said, epithets of praise or blame, because nothing would be more widely divergent than the opinions prevalent among the majority and the minority as to the conduct of one another and as to the interests of which they were respectively in charge. It would be agreed that the responsibilities of the House of Commons were measured by its powers; "and as to its powers, the very first of them, in the order of Nature," was that over its own members for the regulation of its own proceedings. The position of the English House of Commons was altogether peculiar. Other Assemblies had duties to perform, but they were trifles "light as air" in comparison with the work which the British House of Commons had taken upon its shoulders. "The consequence is that the very mass and amount of these duties is the measure of your weakness. Obstruction elsewhere is a plaything and a jest;* obstruction here has it in its power to place fatal and insurmountable obstacles in the way of your discharging your primary obligations." At present the House was at the mercy of members whose one object was to block the transaction of business. The Irishmen were fighting not for liberty in speech, but for licence in obstruction. The personal appeal with which the Prime Minister closed his noble oration will long be remembered:—

The Nationalists suspended.

"I have been nearly half a century in this House, and you will believe me when I say that I am not indifferent to its honour. Personally my prospective concern in this arrangement

* The scenes in the Lower Houses of the Austrian and Hungarian Parliaments in 1897 and 1898 have impaired the force of Mr. Gladstone's contrast.

is small. My lease is all but run out; but there are those here who for years, even for generations, will live, as I hope, to render honourable and splendid service to their country. The House of Commons has never, since the first day of its desperate struggle for existence, stood in a more serious crisis—in a crisis of character and honour, not of external security. As you value the duties which have been committed to you, as you value the traditions you have received, as you esteem highly the interests of the vast Empire for which you work, I appeal to you not too nicely and microscopically to discuss this and that secondary improvement upon which we might differ for ever; but without hesitation and without delay, after the challenges that have been addressed to you, after what you have suffered to-night, to rally to the performance of a great public duty, and to determine that you will continue to be, as you have been, the mainstay of the power and glory of your country, and that you will not degenerate into the laughing-stock of the world."

**A Peroration**

The appeal succeeded; for it was felt to have been made "by one who not only stands at the head of this House in point of ability and position, but who for a length of time has taken a leading part in the proceedings of former Parliaments and is distinguished by this—that he has as much as, and perhaps I might say more than, any member of this House, in former times, stood up nobly in the face of opposition, sometimes of the most formidable character, in defence of the rights and liberty of speech, and especially of minorities in this House." * The urgency rule was adopted, but the antidote proved to be inadequate to the evil, and in 1882 a further reform of procedure was carried, providing that, on the initiative of the Speaker, a debate might, under certain conditions, be closed by a bare majority.

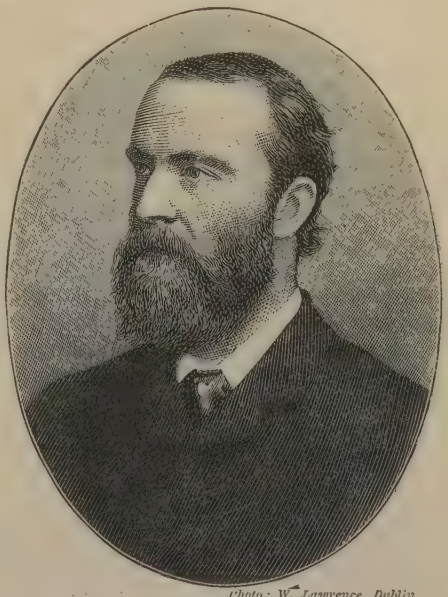


*Photo: W. Lawrence, Dublin.*
CHARLES STEWART PARNELL IN 1881.

On the 4th of February (1881) the debate on the Second Reading of the Coercion Bill began, and was concluded on the 9th. On the same night the Speaker laid on the table the new Rules of Procedure which he had framed in pursuance of the Urgency rule mentioned above. At length, on the 25th, two days before the humiliating disaster of Majuba Hill, the Coercion Bill was carried, all the remaining amendments being put to the vote without further debate. But though the majorities were large, a strong body of Liberal feeling regarded a measure which deprived Irishmen of civil liberty with disapprobation and disgust. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, then under the editorship of Mr. John Morley, had begun a persistent and ultimately successful agitation against the policy of coercion. It rebuked Mr. Forster for his "rather uncouth exultation" at the passing of the Bill.

**The Coercion Bill carried, February, 1881.**

* See Sir Stafford Northcote's speech. Hansard, Feb. 3, 1881.

On April 4th Mr. Gladstone introduced his Budget, by which the income tax was reduced to fivepence and the deficiency so created was met by an addition to the duty on foreign spirits and by a change in the probate and legacy duties. The Budget of 1882, which was his last, contained no changes of importance; and in the December of that year he handed over the Chancellorship of the Exchequer to Mr. Childers.

The death of Lord Beaconsfield on the 19th April, 1881, removed from the political stage Mr. Gladstone's last rival, a great man whose life is still to be written, but of whom this much may safely be predicated: that his predominance at Court was never questioned, that he more than once loosened Mr. Gladstone's grip of the House of Commons and once at least shattered his popularity in the metropolis if not in the country.

**Death of Lord Beaconsfield, April 19th, 1881.**

The Prime Minister immediately wrote to Lord Rowton tendering on behalf of the Government the honour of a public funeral. But a funeral oration was also requisite, and the Premier must say at becoming length everything that was appropriate and nothing that was untrue. The difficulty was so formidable that the victor of Midlothian shrank at the thought, became quite ill, and for several days took to his bed. One morning a visitor found him up again and in his usual spirits. Mr. Gladstone had hit upon certain moral traits or characteristics which his conscience would allow him to make the subjects of panegyric. On the 9th of May he rose in the House of Commons to move that a humble address be presented to her Majesty, praying that her Majesty would give directions that a monument "be erected in the collegiate church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the memory of the late Right Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G." The characteristics of the dead statesman which Mr. Gladstone had selected for special praise were three—his courage, his loyalty to his own race, and his devotion to his wife.

**Mr. Gladstone's Tribute.**

"It would not be fair, and it would not be just, even if it were appropriate, that I, who have been separated from Lord Beaconsfield by longer and larger differences than perhaps ever separated two persons, should endeavour to draw a picture which must be too faintly coloured if executed by my hand. But yet I will allow myself the satisfaction, in dwelling upon topics that are both pleasant to myself and useful to all.

"Lord Beaconsfield had certain great qualities on which it would be idle for me to enlarge. His extraordinary intellectual powers, for instance, were as well known to others as to me. But other qualities there were in him, not merely intellectual or immediately connected with the conduct of affairs, but with regard to which I should wish, were I younger, to stamp the recollection of them on my mind for my own future guidance, and which I strongly recommend to those who are younger for notice and imitation. These characteristics were not only written in a marked manner on his career, but were possessed by him in a degree undoubtedly extraordinary. I speak, for example, of his strength of will, his long-sighted persistency of purpose, reaching from his first entrance on the avenue of life to its very close, his remarkable power of self-government, and last, not least, his great Parliamentary courage, which I, who have been associated in the course of my life with scores of Ministers, have never seen surpassed.

"There were other points in his character on which I cannot refrain from saying a word or two. I wish to express my admiration for those strong sympathies of race, for the sake of which he was always ready to risk popularity and influence. A like sentiment I feel towards the strength of his sympathies with that brotherhood to which he thought, and justly thought, himself entitled to belong—the brotherhood of men of letters. I read, in a very interesting book, the Autobiography of Thomas Cooper, how, in the year 1844, when his influence with his party was not yet established, Mr. Cooper

came to him in the character of a struggling literary man, who was also a Chartist, and the then Mr. Disraeli met him with the most active and cordial kindness, so ready was his sympathy for genius. . . .

"There is one slight matter to which I have satisfaction in referring. There is much misapprehension abroad as to the personal sentiments between public men who are divided in policy. . . . Sir, I wish to take the occasion—if with the permission of the House I may for a moment degenerate into egotism upon a subject much too high for it—of recording at this place and this hour my firm conviction that in all the judgments ever delivered by Lord Beaconsfield upon myself, he never was actuated by sentiments of personal antipathy." *

If it were necessary to prove that this magnificent oration completely triumphed over the difficulties by which it was surrounded, the words of Sir Stafford Northcote, who was perhaps Lord Beaconsfield's most devoted adherent, would be conclusive: "A monument of a higher character than any that can be carved in stone or marble has already been erected to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield in the speech we have just heard."

The Transvaal, 1881.

On April 22nd Mr. Gladstone made an important pronouncement on the South African policy of the Government. He had come into office pledged to a certain extent to respect the claims and wishes of South African colonists, whatever their nationality, for self-government. Respect for continuity had prevented the immediate recall of Sir Bartle Frere, who had shown already, under Lord Beaconsfield's Government, a strong disinclination to accept even the broadest hints that his services were dispensable. At last, when the grand scheme of South African Federation had failed, a Liberal Government, influenced by the urgent recommendations of Mr. Leonard Courtney and other prominent Radicals, decided upon Frere's recall. In December, 1880, the Boers proclaimed a republic and attacked the English garrisons in the Transvaal. Owing to mistakes in tactics, never properly explained, our force suffered a series of disasters, which ended in the defeat at Majuba Hill at the end of February. Sir Evelyn Wood, who succeeded to the chief command of the English troops, agreed with President Joubert upon an armistice of eight days, which was extended. Sir Evelyn's despatches were so prudent and pacific that Mr. Gladstone felt himself able to resist the Jingo cry for revenge. It would have been quite easy for the British Empire to crush 8,000 Boers, and to arrange for the good government of the survivors by young English gentlemen from Oxford or Cambridge; and from the standpoint of party politics such a course would have been very expedient. The Government chose to exercise magnanimity. Terms were granted by which the Boers admitted a British resident and British control over their foreign policy, and in return received complete autonomy at home.

The Irish Land Bill, 1881.

Meanwhile the Irish Land Bill had been introduced in fulfilment of Mr. Gladstone's intention. The Commission appointed in the previous year had reported, and basing themselves upon this report, the Government brought in a Bill for checking arbitrary increases of rent. The Bill recognised universal tenant right, virtually abolished the limitation imposed by the Act of 1870 upon the right of assignment, and set up a Land Court for the fixing of judicial rents for a period of fifteen years.

* It is interesting to recall that this conviction, which Mr. Gladstone often expressed in conversation, was explicitly confirmed by Sir Stafford Northcote.

The Land Act of 1881 was a very laborious and intricate piece of work, so laborious that Mr. Gladstone used to class it in the same category with the drafting of the Succession Duty Bill and his course of reading at Oxford for the Final Schools. Very few members of the House of Commons even pretended to understand the Bill; but this did not prevent it from occupying the almost undivided attention of the House for four months. The Tories talked vaguely about confiscation. Among the Irish members, Mr. Timothy Healy distinguished himself by the acuteness of his criticisms, and attracted, not for the first or last time, the admiration of Mr. Gladstone.

All kinds of absurd impossibilities were suggested as alternatives to the Bill. Over 800 amendments were proposed. But Mr. Gladstone held resolutely to the vital provisions of his scheme in the Commons. The House of Lords threatened to upset the main principle of the Bill, but Lord Selborne for once stood to his guns, and his authority, strengthened eventually by the prudent timidity of Lord Salisbury, secured the passing of the Third Reading of the measure on the 16th August. Mr. Gladstone wrote a grateful letter to the Lord Chancellor—"the most demonstrative," said Lord Selborne, "which I ever received from him."*

Only the dire distresses and necessities of Ireland made the Act possible; for many Whigs and Tories were allied against it, on the ground plainly put forward by Lord Randolph Churchill, that its object was to get rid of the Irish landlords, the strongest "bond of union" between Ireland and England. The Bill was too thorough to please Mr. Parnell; and accordingly 260 amendments were placed to the credit of his well-disciplined little party. More than this he dared not do to wreck a measure which so seriously damaged the prospects of constitutional disruption and agrarian agitation, and went some way towards justifying Mr. Gladstone's confident declaration three years later, that through its instrumentality "almost every case of over-renting in Ireland has been touched," and that, "speaking generally of the people in Ireland, who are a people of annual tenancies, over-renting is virtually at an end."†

**The Land League and the Land Act, 1881.**

At a National Land League Convention at Dublin in September, Mr. Parnell found it necessary to declare that the Land Act had not put an end to the work of the League; and a resolution was passed that the League should now direct its efforts to the entire abolition of landlordism in Ireland. Practically the cry of "No Rent" was substituted for the cry of "Fair Rent"; for the Parnellites now began to proclaim that a just rental in Ireland was about one-seventh or one-eighth of the actual rental. Thus the Land Act only eased an economic strain in order to accelerate a political crisis. "It brought to a crisis the affairs of the party connected with the Land League. It made it almost a necessity for that party either to advance or to recede. And what course did they take? They chose the desperate course; they chose to unfurl the flag against all property, against all rent."‡

* See "Memorials, Personal and Political," Part II., by Roundell Palmer, Earl of Selborne, vol. ii., pp. 27, 28.

† Speech at Edinburgh, September 1st, 1884.

‡ Mr. Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons, February 8th, 1882.

The cry of "No Rent" grew louder, the speeches of the Parnellite leaders grew more menacing, the language of their understudies—the petty spouters of sedition and outrage—grew more and more violent, until, at the beginning of October, 1881, in a great speech at Leeds, Mr. Gladstone felt it necessary to appeal to all parties for support. "If, when we have that short further experience [of the working of the Land Act] to which I have referred, it shall then appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland, between law on the one side and sheer lawlessness upon the other; if the law, purged from defect and from any taint of injustice, is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society are to be set at nought, then I say, gentlemen, without hesitation, the resources of civilisation against its enemies are not yet exhausted. I shall recognise in full, when the facts are ripe—and their ripeness is approaching—the duty and the responsibility of the Government. I call upon all orders and degrees of men, not in these two kingdoms, but in these three, to support the Government in the discharge of its duty and in acquitting itself of that responsibility."

The Resources of Civilisation.

The party of law and order did not respond to Mr. Gladstone's appeal. But he was determined that the Land Act, having been passed, should be allowed a fair opportunity of working: "We have endeavoured to pay the Irish nation the debt of justice, and of liberal justice. . . . We are convinced that they desire to take free and full advantage of the Land Act." It was discouraging, he said, but not surprising that no Irishman had the moral courage to lift up his voice against the man who had just declared that, until he had submitted his "test cases," any farmer who paid his rent was a fool—

"a dangerous denunciation in Ireland, gentlemen—a dangerous thing to be denounced as a fool by the head, by a man who has made himself the head, of the most violent party in Ireland, and who has offered the greatest temptations to the Irish people. That is no small matter. He desires, gentlemen, to arrest the operation of the Act—to stand, as Aaron stood, between the living and the dead; but to stand there, not as Aaron stood, to arrest but to spread the plague."

In the same speech the Premier asked what Mr. Parnell proposed to do now that the Bill which he had vainly tried to kill had been passed.

"The people of Ireland, gentlemen, as we believe—and this is just the matter that the next few weeks or months will have to determine—desire, in conformity with the advice of their old patriots, of their bishops, of their trusted friends, to make a full trial of the Land Act; and if they do make a full trial of that Act, you may rely upon it—it is as certain as human contingencies can be—it will give peace to the country. Peace to the country is exactly the thing which is not the object of Mr. Parnell and his disciples; and therefore, in the prosecution of their policy, the thing which is more than all necessary for them to do is to intercept the action of the Land Act. How do they set about it? Mr. Parnell, with his myrmidons around him in his Land League, goes to Dublin, instructs the people of Ireland that they are not to go into the Court which the Parliament of the country has established in order to do them justice—they are not to go into the Court until he gives them leave. He says that they are not to go there until he has framed certain test cases, and until he and his brethren of the Land League have taken these test cases into Court." *

Parnell's Test Cases.

* Speech at Leeds, October 7th, 1881.

"An unscrupulous and dishonest speech" was Mr. Parnell's comment. But the resources of civilisation were *not* exhausted. For the moment the views of the Chief Secretary and the Prime Minister were in complete harmony. The denunciation of Parnell at Leeds was followed on the 13th of October by his arrest under two warrants, one of them referring to "reasonable suspicion" of treasonable practices under the new Coercion Act. At the same time Mr. Dillon, Mr. Sexton, and the chief officials of the Land League were arrested and conveyed with Mr. Parnell to Kilmainham Gaol. The imprisoned Land Leaguers at once issued the famous "No Rent" manifesto, calling upon Irish tenants to pay no rent so long as their leaders were in gaol. The Government no less promptly proclaimed the Land League an illegal body, and proceeded to suppress its branches in all parts of the country. Happily the influence of the League was not strong enough to prevent the Act coming into operation, and numerous applications were made to the Land Commissioners to fix judicial rents. It might have been supposed that the Irish landlords would have endeavoured at this juncture to atone for the long course of historical iniquity which had made the Irish Question. They might have tried to distinguish themselves honourably from the leaders of the tenantry by promoting the smooth and peaceful administration of the Land Act. Alas, no. "It must be confessed," writes Lord Selborne, "that those who were desirous to see justice done to landlords as well as tenants were not assisted by much prudence or self-restraint on the part of their chief spokesmen in Ireland. It was with no very good grace that they suffered the Act to pass; and before it was brought into operation, after having become law, they denounced it publicly and loudly." *

His Arrest.

Suppression of the Land League.

In the months which succeeded the arrest of the Irish leaders, the opinions of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster rapidly diverged. The confidence which Mr. Forster placed in official statistics and police reports strengthened his belief in "resolute Government." It is curious to reflect that in spite of his reliance on the police for information, he was not aware of being not once only, but many times, within an ace of assassination! Mr. Gladstone's attitude towards Mr. Parnell underwent a change. Early in April, 1882, a correspondence was opened between Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Herbert Gladstone, and between Captain O'Shea and the Prime Minister himself. These communications dealt mainly with the question of arrears. The Act of 1881 had conferred on every tenant a property in his farm, but in order to give its provisions full beneficial effect, arrears must be dealt with. The Irish leaders were beginning to be afraid of the fire they had themselves helped to light; and they seized

Downing Street and Kilmainham, April, 1882.

* When the Session of 1882 opened, Lord Donoughmore carried in the House of Lords a motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Land Act before it had been four months in operation. Lord Selborne, maintaining that the Act had beyond question improved the moral position of the Government for the enforcement of law, compared the Peers to children who plant flowers and pull them up a day or two afterwards to see if they are growing. But his protests were in vain; and "a one-sided, irritating and altogether unprofitable inquiry" followed. See Lord Selborne's "Personal and Political Memorials," Part ii., vol. ii., p. 43; and Hansard, February 7th, 1882.

# To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.

FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY &c. &c.

We the Council and Members of the Leeds Incorporated Chamber of Commerce rejoice to have this opportunity of expressing our appreciation of the benefits which the trading community of this country owes to your services in Parliament and as a Minister of the Crown.

Your name will be associated in history with the reforms in our financial system, which inaugurated by Sir Robert Peel, owe their development and completion to your hand. You will also be remembered as taking a great and honourable part in removing the restrictions which fettered the external trade of this country; a change which resulted in the rapid extension of its industry and commerce, and was the commencement of a period of unequalled prosperity.

While acknowledging the great advantages we have derived from the increase of trade with France, with which your name, as well as that of Mr. Cobden, will always be connected, we trust that the present negotiations with the French Government will render our commercial intercourse with that country still more free and unfettered.

We hope that the Ministry over which you preside will use its best efforts to carry out the various progressive reforms which the commercial community has declared to be necessary; we may specially mention the creation of a Department of Trade and Agriculture under a Minister of the first rank, which has already received the sanction of a vote in the House of Commons. The reform of our Bankruptcy Laws has already been undertaken by your Ministry, and we trust that nothing may prevent a comprehensive measure being passed next session. The reform of our Patent Laws is urgently needed, in order to put our inventors at least on an equality with those of the Continent and the United States of America.

Earnestly desiring that you may long be spared to continue your services to your country, we tender you a hearty welcome to our town, and the assurance of our sincere respect and admiration.

Signed and Sealed on behalf of the Leeds Incorporated Chamber of Commerce.

James Kitson Jnr

President

REDUCED FAC-SIMILE OF ADDRESS PRESENTED TO MR. GLADSTONE BY THE LEEDS INCORPORATED CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, OCT. 8, 1881.

upon this subject because it afforded an opportunity for initiating a better and more honourable policy. On the 11th of April Captain O'Shea was authorised by Mr. Parnell to tell the Premier that "if a satisfactory settlement of arrears could be arrived at he should consider it his duty to use his personal influence for the purpose of assisting in the preservation of law and order in Ireland." On the 15th Mr. Gladstone replied: "I think you assume the existence of a spirit on my part with which you can sympathise. Whether there can be any agreement on the means or not, the end in view is of vast moment; and assuredly no resentment or personal prejudice, or false shame, or other impediment extraneous to the matter, will prevent the Government from treading whatever path may most safely and shortly lead to the pacification of Ireland."

Mr. Chamberlain received independent communications, and answered in the same spirit. A memorandum from Mr. Herbert Gladstone and other portions of the correspondence were read at a Cabinet meeting on April 22nd; and the Cabinet unanimously resolved upon the adoption of a conciliatory course. A few days later, when Mr. Redmond introduced into the Commons an Arrears Bill framed by Mr. Parnell, Mr. Gladstone gave it a favourable reception on the ground that it opened a good prospect for the working of the land laws in Ireland.* A minute of an interview between Captain O'Shea and Mr. Forster, and another letter from Mr. Parnell, were circulated at a Cabinet meeting on the 1st of May. Mr. Parnell said in his letter that "if the arrears question be settled upon the lines indicated by us, I have every confidence, a confidence shared by my colleagues, that the exertions which we should be able to make would be effective in stopping outrages and intimidation of all kinds"; and added that the accomplishment of a larger, but not revolutionary, programme would enable them "to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles." Ministers were not unduly elated or impressed; but they did not wish to renew the very severe Coercion Act which was about to expire. They determined therefore to introduce a new Crimes Act based on a different and better principle. Mr. Forster insisted that the members in Kilmainham should not be released until this new Act had been passed, or until Mr. Parnell promised his assistance in putting down outrages. His colleagues did not agree, and decided to send directions at once for the release of Messrs. Parnell, Dillon, and O'Kelly from Kilmainham. Mr. Forster thereupon resigned.

**Mr. Forster resigns, May, 1882.**

Mr. Gladstone's view may be briefly given by means of short extracts from two speeches which he delivered in the House of Commons in the month of May:—

"Nothing, in our view, could be more simple, more distinct and isolated, than the question we had to consider with regard to the release of the three members. In our opinion that matter had no connection whatever with the question of arrears or any other question. It was simply the question whether we had prospectively reasonable suspicions of conduct on the part of those gentlemen, who were arrested under the exceptional powers of the Act, tending to the disturbance of law and order, and if we had not those reasonable suspicions it was our duty, in our opinion, looking neither to the right nor to the left, at once to open the prison doors to them."†

* The Bill was afterwards practically adopted by the Government and passed.

† Statement in the House of Commons, May 16th, 1882.

"Mr. Forster used words equivalent to saying that he desired to obtain from Mr. Parnell and those with whom he acted, an avowal of change. It was something like in effect asking for a penitential confession. I disclaimed alike the desire and the right to ask of Mr. Parnell, or any of those who sat near him, anything of the sort. In considering whether we should be justified in closing the prison doors on Mr. Parnell, I had no title to ask any question but the one whether I believed that the effect of his release would be prejudicial to the public interests. . . . .

"Mr. Forster again and again, and not unnaturally from his point of view, used words to this effect: 'Do not buy obedience to the law; do not enter into any arrangement; do not pay blackmail.' With every one of those propositions I entirely agreed. But I held them to be wholly without application to the circumstances in which we stood. There was no arrangement of any sort between Mr. Parnell and ourselves. There was no bargain, no arrangement, no negotiations; for nothing had been asked, and nothing had been taken. We frankly availed ourselves of information tendered to us as to the views of men whose position in Ireland made them sensible factors in the materials that go to determine the condition of that country; and that information led us to conclusions on our part to which we hastened to give effect." *

*Photo: W. Lawrence, Dublin.*

KILMAINHAM GAOL.

Such was the Prime Minister's view of what has generally been referred to as "the Kilmainham Treaty."

The terms in which Mr. Gladstone announced the decision of the Cabinet on May 3rd, 1882, are of some importance on account of a controversy which arose in the newspapers six years later:—

"I have to state that directions have been sent to Ireland for the release forthwith of the three members of this House who have been imprisoned since October last, under the powers given by the Protection of Persons and Property Act. The list of persons similarly imprisoned will be carefully examined further, with a view to the release, in accordance with like principles and considerations, of all persons who are not believed to be associated with the commission of crime."

Lord Cowper resigned the office of Viceroy at the same time as Mr. Forster resigned that of Chief Secretary for Ireland. They were succeeded by Lord Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish, both of whom were connected by ties of marriage, of personal friendship, and of close political association with the Prime Minister. It was one more proof of his desire to serve Ireland. The new Viceroy and his Chief Secretary left England on the 5th of May. On the 6th, Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, the permanent Under-Secretary, were murdered—butchered—in the Phœnix Park. Two days later Mr. Gladstone gave notice of the approaching introduction of a Crimes Bill, which, although its provisions were severe, did not continue the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. It was not brought in from vindictive motives. "It was not a Bill framed upon the Phœnix Park outrages"; but it was, of course, strengthened in consequence of the

**The Phœnix Park Tragedy, May 6, 1882.**

* Speech in the House of Commons, May 4th, 1882.

indignation excited by those outrages; and an amendment stiffening the "search" clauses was carried by Mr. George Russell against the Government. The peculiar horror of the crime had a deep effect upon the English mind. Mr. Parnell wrote to Mr. Gladstone, offering to resign his seat—a course which the Premier strongly deprecated—proclaimed his detestation of the crime, and declared, truly enough, that the murderers had aimed "the deadliest blow which it was in their power to deal against his hopes in connection with the new course on which the Government had just entered."

The Phœnix Park murders may be regarded as the climax of the misfortunes of the Government so far as Ireland is concerned; and from this time, under the combined influences of the Land Act, the Arrears Act, and the Crimes Act, the condition of that country began to improve. But if in the years 1883 and 1884 the dark clouds that hung over Ireland began to lift, it was only that another storm might burst upon the devoted heads of the British Government in another part of the world. "I do not think," wrote a member of the Cabinet at the beginning of 1882, "that there was ever so unfortunate a Government; domestic affairs were never so difficult; and abroad new troubles seem to be constantly springing up." Much, indeed, had already been accomplished. To perform unfulfilled obligations and to get rid of the burdens which had been imposed upon the country by Lord Beaconsfield's Government, without interrupting the continuity of British policy, were the objects which Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville had set before them. We have seen how success had crowned their efforts in Montenegro. The next step in the execution of the Berlin Treaty was the delimitation of the Greek frontier. The negotiations were slow and tedious; but they were ultimately successful. The causes as well as the fruits of success were recorded by the Prime Minister in one of his great speeches at Leeds:—

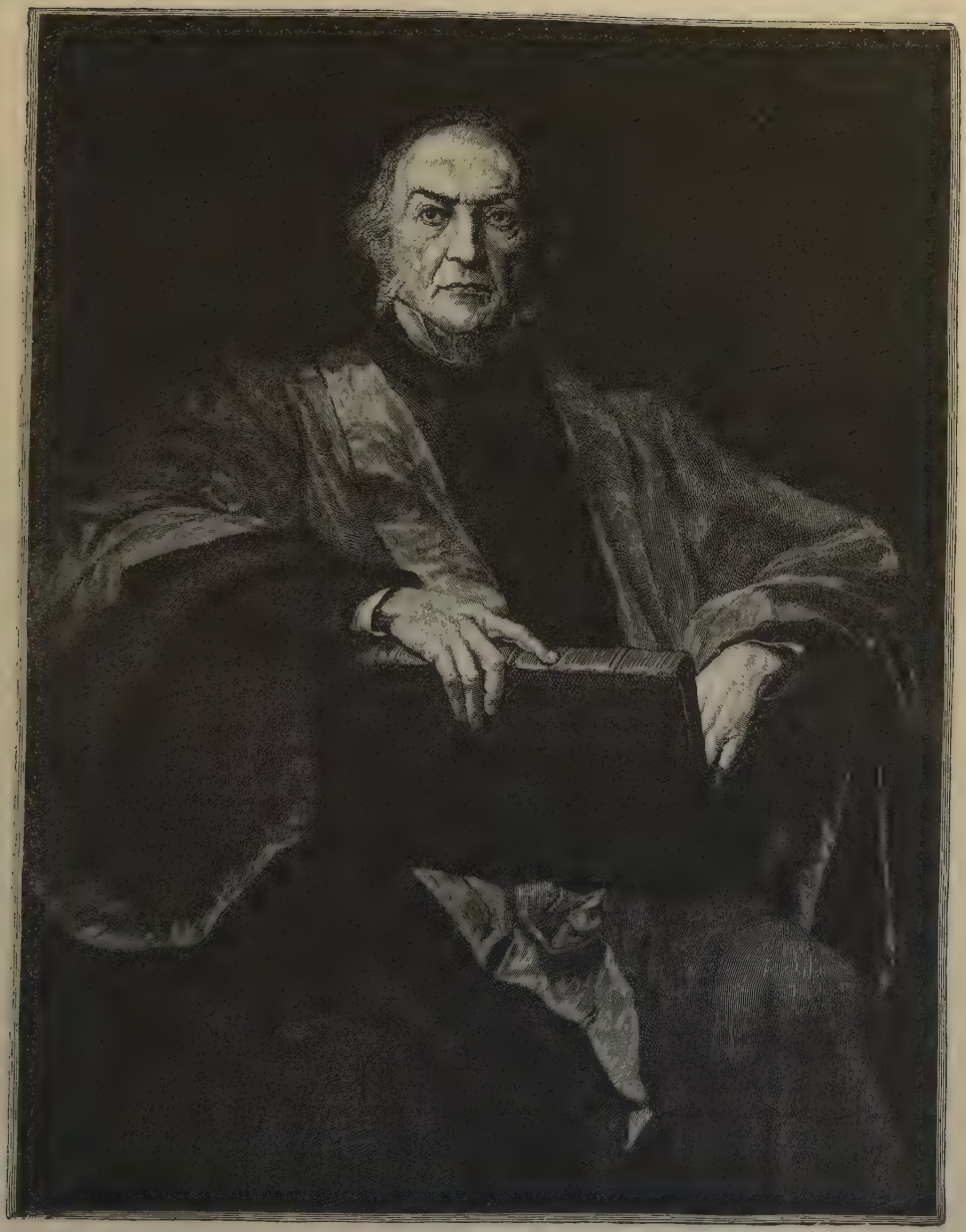
**Carrying out the Berlin Treaty.**

> "I rejoice to say that though no progress whatever had been made eighteen months ago in the fulfilment of that purpose, a country famous in history, the country of Thessaly, inhabited from end to end by members of the Greek race, to which in old times we have owed so much—that country of Thessaly has been handed out of servitude into freedom, by the influence exerted by the Powers of Europe, to which you have contributed your full share. And never, gentlemen, in the course of my life have I enjoyed a purer pleasure than in witnessing the accomplishment of that work, the removal of that yoke, the re-establishment of that union among Greek populations of different regions, without the effusion of one single drop of blood."

**Thessaly Free.**

Mr. Gladstone, who had celebrated his political jubilee in the previous December, was suffering at the beginning of the year 1883 from overwork and sleeplessness.* He had intended to make a political tour in Midlothian; but this was forbidden by Sir Andrew Clark. On the 17th of January he consented to leave London and pay a

* On New Year's Day Mr. Gladstone wrote a touching note to a poor girl dying of consumption, who had sent him a small birthday present—a bookmarker on which she had worked "The Bible our Guide":—"May the guidance which you are good enough to desire on my behalf, avail you fully at every step of that journey in which, if I do not precede, I shall shortly follow you."



W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1882.

*(By permission, from the Picture by Sir W. B. Richmond, R.A.)*

visit to Cannes, where he stayed with Mrs. Gladstone at Lord Wolverton's villa, overlooking the Gulf of San Juan. The Prime Minister, as usual, sought refreshment in diversity of occupation. With Miss Gladstone, he visited the Carnival at Nice, where his tall hat attracted much attention. He conversed with the Prince of Wales and the Comte de Paris, and refreshed himself with a book upon Presbyterian ritual which emanated from a Lowland manse. "Though by no means a Presbyterian myself, I hope"—so he wrote to the author in a letter of acknowledgment—"that this tendency [to ritualism] will not be indulged in without reserve. For there was a solemn and stern simplicity in the old form of Presbyterian ritual which was entitled to great respect, and was a thing totally apart from the mean nakedness and cold worldliness and indifference so widely dominant in English services fifty years ago." Meanwhile the Phœnix Park murderers were discovered, and the contrast between Mr. Gladstone's recreations and the anxious deliberations of his colleagues evoked from Tory orators the usual strain of abusive patriotism.

**At Cannes, 1883.**

The Parliamentary Session of 1883 was not fruitful. It was found necessary to drop the Municipal Reform Bill for London; but the Bankruptcy, Patents, Agricultural Holdings, and Corrupt Practices Bills, which passed, were useful measures. One Bill went through with sensational rapidity. The Irish American dynamitards had been exceptionally busy in London. False beards and skeleton keys, tins of chemicals, indiarubber bags of nitroglycerine, primitive infernal machines, and rudimentary factories for their construction, were discovered in the metropolis and other towns. There was a good deal of consternation. The House of Commons, like most other public buildings, was found to have been marked out for destruction; and the Parnellites, who were a little disquieted by the infernal machinery of the friends of Ireland, quite forgot to obstruct the Explosives Bill. Introduced by Sir William Harcourt on the 9th of April, it was carried through all its stages in an hour and a half, sent up to the House of Lords, and blessed with the royal assent on the following day.

**The Session of 1883.**

On April 20th the Contagious Diseases Acts, against which a strong agitation had been instituted in the country, were condemned by a Resolution of the House, and in consequence of this Resolution the Government suspended the order for the compulsory examination of women in the affected areas. On August 18th Mr. Gladstone said that he regretted the decision of the House:—

> "Personally, I would rather extend than restrict the operation of these Acts; but I admit that there is considerable difficulty in defending a system which can only be partially applied as these Acts have been . . . and everyone admits that, in the present state of public opinion, it would be absolutely impossible to dream of extending the area."

In this Session, too, the Government made an effort to settle the stupid dispute between the House of Commons and the constituency of Northampton, which was still advertising atheism, wasting the time of Parliament, and expending the energies of Mr. Bradlaugh. The attempt, though unsuccessful, was not altogether thrown away; for the Second Reading of the

**The Affirmation Bill, 1883.**

Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Bill produced one of Mr. Gladstone's noblest speeches.*

The Second Reading of the Bill was lost by three votes. It was thought that if the division had taken place on the night of Mr. Gladstone's speech the Bill might have been saved.

After the close of the Session, at the invitation of Sir Donald Currie, Mr. Gladstone and several members of his family undertook another voyage, this time in the *Pembroke Castle*. The railway journey from Chester, where they met Lord Tennyson, to Barrow-in-Furness, where they embarked in a tug for the *Pembroke Castle*, was a triumphal progress, crowds shouting "Gladstone" at every railway station; and at Barrow thousands of people lined the shore, cheering for "Gladstone" and "Tennyson." On September 17th the party dined with the King of Denmark at the Castle of Fredensdorg, and next day a royal and imperial company assembled for a return-dinner on the yacht. Mr. Gladstone proposed the health of the King of Denmark, dwelling upon the fact that Englishmen and Danes were sprung from common ancestors. The Czar proposed the health of the Queen of England; the King of Denmark that of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone. The Queen of Denmark drank the health of Lord Tennyson. In the course of the evening the Czarina said to Lord Tennyson, "What a kind and sympathetic man Mr. Gladstone is! How he stood by little Montenegro!"

**A Cruise with Tennyson, 1883.**

On the 29th of February, 1884, Mr. Gladstone, in a wonderfully lucid speech, introduced the County Franchise Bill, by which the qualifications in counties were assimilated to those in boroughs, and two million voters added to the constituency of the United Kingdom. At first the Tory party offered a vigorous resistance in the Commons; but gradually a perception of the danger of this course came over them, and at last they merely demanded that a Redistribution Bill should accompany it. Mr. Gladstone's determination carried the day, and on June 26th the motion for the Third Reading was carried *nemine contradicente*, these words being inserted in the journals of the House at the instance of the Prime Minister, who quoted at the same time as a warning to the Peers the advice of Polonius to his son: "Beware of entrance to a quarrel; but being in, bear't that the opposer may beware of thee." The House of Lords accepted the challenge and threw out the Bill on the ground that it was unaccompanied by a redistribution of seats, and in hopes of forcing on a dissolution. Mr. Gladstone's reply was an autumn Session, preceded by a campaign in Midlothian, in which he expressed his conviction that "the legislative action of the House of Lords for the last fifty years had not been a benefit or a blessing to the country."† Lord Salisbury, who replied in a speech at Glasgow on October 1st, warned the country that the free working of British

**Enfranchising the Labourers, 1884.**

* The peroration of this speech will be found on p. 511. A quotation from Lucretius was peculiarly impressive.

† See speech in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange, August 30th, 1884. On the following day Mr. Gladstone pointed with satisfaction to the improved condition of Ireland, making one remark which, in the light of later events, is pregnant with meaning. He did not say that the Irish question was altogether settled; but "Parliamentary and political difficulties are one thing, and social difficulties are another."

institutions was endangered by the growth of the power of the wire-puller, centred in the caucus under the direction of the Prime Minister—"master of the House of Commons, master of the House of Lords, nay yielding but apparent and simulated obedience to the orders of the Sovereign, gathering into his own hands every power of the State and using them so that when the renewal of power comes his influence may be overwhelming and his powers may be renewed." In this month of October, however, after the country had been convulsed by agitation, a compromise was arrived at. The Government drafted a Redistribution Bill which satisfied the Tory leaders; and on the 13th of November the Franchise Bill was again formally introduced into the House of Lords, and in due course it passed without opposition. On the 14th the Poet Laureate, who had been much perturbed by the prospect of a constitutional crisis, had sent to Mr. Gladstone the famous lines:—

"Steersman, be not precipitate in thine act
Of steering, for the river here, my friend,
Parts in two channels, moving to one end—
This goes straight forward to the cataract:
That streams about the bend.
But tho' the cataract seems the nearer way,
Whate'er the crowd on either bank may say,
Take thou 'the bend,' 'twill save thee many a day."

Mr. Gladstone did not attempt poetry, but made this reply:—

Downing Street, Nov. 15th, 1884.

"MY DEAR TENNYSON,

"I think it a great honour to receive from you a suggestion in verse. For three months I have laboured to the best and utmost of my ability to avert a crisis and an era of organic change, which it seems to me that the Tory benches have been inviting; and I have been quite willing to tread any path, direct or circuitous, which could lead me to the attainment of this end. Indeed, I have, as you advised, toiled in the circuitous method; but unfortunately with this issue, that, working round the labyrinth, I find myself at the end where I was at the beginning. However, in any and every way open to us we shall continue to work for peace. 'The resources of civilisation are not yet exhausted,' and I will not despair, provided our friends, and you among them, continue, as I feel sure it will be, to give us their firm and united support. Believe me,

"Yours most sincerely,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

It is said that the agreement between the two parties was aided, if not brought about, by the Queen. "Nothing," wrote Lord Selborne emphatically, "was in my opinion more honourable to Gladstone during the whole of his great career than the resolution which, under his guidance, the Cabinet adopted to come, if possible, to an agreement with the heads of the Conservative party as to a scheme of redistribution which both parties might accept. The necessary overtures were made and were met in the same spirit, and a committee of two or three leading men on both sides, honestly desirous of arriving at a satisfactory solution, was charged with the work. The result was marvellous. With incredible facility and rapidity a larger, more thorough-going, more symmetrical and consistent scheme for a rearrangement of all the electoral areas in the United Kingdom was constructed and agreed to." There were many better

Liberals than Lord Selborne who regretted that another opportunity for dealing with the hereditary legislators had been lost.

The difficulties of the Gladstonian Administration in Egypt were, like the rest of its troubles abroad, mostly inherited from its predecessor. Lord Beaconsfield, by the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, entered, unknown to himself, on a series of engagements which could only end in actual intervention in the affairs of Egypt. Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, criticised the transaction at the time, and warned the Government of what might be its consequences. In 1881, when twitted with the rise of Suez Canal shares, he drew a distinction between the objections he had

**The Egyptian Imbroglio.**

MR. GLADSTONE SPEAKING AT THE BANQUET ON THE *PEMBROKE CASTLE* (*p.* 675).

taken to the purchase "as a complex operation," and the objections he had not taken to it "as a financial operation considered as a financial operation, conceived and executed by a stock-broker." And his final verdict was delivered in 1888:—

"As an operation of British finance, I consider the purchase of the Suez Canal shares to have been worse than ridiculous; it was wrong and it was dangerous. As a money speculation I am not aware of ever having said or thought it would prove a bad one. As I think it had to do with the imprudent engagements subsequently contracted in Egypt, and the vast cost they entailed, I think that in its ultimate effect that purchase entailed, or helped to entail, great pecuniary loss to the country."*

* Letter to a Newcastle correspondent, *Times*, April 30th, 1888.

His protest against the deception practised on the public was in Cobden's best vein.

"The doctrine of safe-guarding the road to India began with the purchase of the shares in the Suez Canal, and I must say that manœuvre was most successful. It was admirably devised for hoodwinking the people of the country; and it did carry with it, undoubtedly, approval at the time. But it was a mere delusion. No doubt the Suez Canal is of importance; but if war breaks out, and if the channel of the Suez Canal becomes vital or material to our communications with India, we shall not secure it one bit the better because we have been foolish enough to acquire a certain number of shares in the Canal. We must secure it by the strong hand. We must secure it by the superiority of the naval power. That superiority we could secure whether we are a proprietor in the Canal or not." *

But behind and beyond these details lay the broad principle of objection to "imperial expansion." Brought up in a school of statesmen who preferred solid comfort and compact power to the hollow and often sordid grandeurs of a spreading dominion, he disliked the Imperialism that sprang up after the Franco-German War, whether it appeared in the Disraelitish form of "an ascendancy in the councils of Europe," or in the later and more insidious guise of "a mission" to native races. He believed that but little good was done by this means to the subject people. He held with Mr. Chamberlain that at home only our upper classes, who want provision for younger sons, are benefited by territorial aggrandisement. He saw far more clearly than his opponents the extent to which the acquisition of territory would follow their new doctrines. "In South Africa," he said, "you must still face this difficulty, that your emigrants will go out beyond your frontier, wherever they find farms convenient to be taken; and you will have the same difficulties and conflicts as you have here [in Bechuanaland] . . . . The tendency of colonists has been to go beyond the frontier, beginning long ago with the rivers nearer to the Cape, and gradually extending from one river to another; and thus it has been a process of indefinite extension. And whatever countries you occupy you will still have the same difficulties to contend with. . . . We believe that even if we were in Bechuanaland there is no possibility of composing and quieting it. It is a question of armed occupation. It is therefore a question of annexation, with the certainty that in making that annexation you are only preparing the way for a new and further discontent. The old settlers in Bechuanaland can go beyond the frontier and again involve you in a similar controversy; so that to speak of proceeding to the equator, or as far as cultivable or desirable land extends towards the equator, is no figure of speech, it is no exaggeration. . . . Unlimited space, as history has often shown, is a more formidable foe than armed hosts." †

Imperialism and Africa.

In 1877, in answer to one who advocated the occupation of part of Lower Egypt, he had written:—"Our first site in Egypt, be it by larceny, or be it by emption, will be the almost certain egg of a North African Empire that will grow and grow until another Victoria and Albert, titles of the lake sources of the White Nile, come within our border, and till we

A Remarkable Forecast.

* Speech at Glasgow, December 5th, 1879.

† See speech in the House of Commons, March 16th, 1883, on Sir John Gorst's motion concerning the disorder in Bechuanaland.

finally join hands across the equator with Natal and Cape Town."* But fate proved too strong for statesmanship. The condition of Egypt, the reluctance of Europe to improve it, our own diplomatic entanglements and untimely hesitation, and the unhappy vacillations of France, forced upon England an intervention desired originally neither by Conservatives nor by Liberals.† Our intervention was, in one sense, a legacy from Ismail Pasha, that brilliant Khedive who had attempted to make his country "a part of Europe," without deviating from the first principles of Oriental finance. At first he had been successful. The signs of modern progress appeared. His subjects became more cultivated; tourists swarmed, and foreign residents multiplied; trading places and deserts and swamps were annexed in the Soudan, and their original possessors were bullied and robbed. Railways, hotels, European streets, and theatres were built; peasant farms were converted wholesale into a huge Khedivial monopoly. Then came a financial crisis. The sale of the Canal shares realised £4,000,000; but it failed to avert a collapse. The Khedive's schemes had cost upwards of £100,000,000; and at least half had been pocketed by bond-holders and brokers, who swindled under cover of the Capitulations. Several unsuccessful attempts at composition were made. Then the unmailed but formidable fist of Bismarck was raised; and France and England, alarmed by his threat to enforce the decisions of the European Courts, decided to intervene in earnest. The Sultan deposed Ismail and installed his son Tewfik. A new financial composition was made, and two controllers, a Frenchman and an Englishman, were appointed to carry it out. The arrangement worked well for a year; but it weakened the prestige of the native Government, and imposed on France and England duties which were at the time not realised clearly by anyone but Gambetta. The fellaheen remembered the taxation of the last few years; the army was jealous of the preference shown to the Turk. Two mutinies, headed by Arabi, occurred in 1881—one in February, the other in September. In the interval between them, he managed to form some kind of a "national" party out of fanatical schoolmen, ignorant peasants, and ambitious young Egyptians of the official class. For a time Sherif Pasha and the Khedive made head against Arabi with the help of the better elements of Egypt. But at the beginning of 1882 Arabi reappeared and forced the Ministry to give him office. And finally he produced his manifesto "Egypt for the Egyptians," and put an end to the dual control of Egyptian finance. In the meanwhile Europe was negotiating. Gambetta wished France and England to intervene, but his Ministry fell at the critical moment (January 27th) on a domestic question. De Freycinet succeeded him, and assured the Chamber, in the name of the new Ministry, that while "we are on these benches, no adventure need be feared." However, on May 15th the joint fleets were despatched; on June 11th came the massacre at Alexandria. After restoring order, Arabi proceeded to entrench himself

* "Aggression in the East," *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1877. *Cf.* speech at Edinburgh, November 25th, 1879.

† In a speech on the vote of censure in the Lords in 1885, Lord Granville quoted a remark made by Lord Beaconsfield to a foreign statesman in 1879: "I would not take Egypt as a gift."

in the fortifications that commanded the bay, in the face of orders and threats, and more than one ultimatum. On July 11th the French admiral obeyed his orders and steamed out of the harbour; Sir Beauchamp Seymour interpreted his instructions and destroyed the forts. In another month British troops were in Egypt, and Arabi's last hopes were dashed to the ground at Tel-el-kebir. Thus

**Bombardment of Alexandria.**

"France, in the exercise of her undoubted right to judge of her duties, withdrew, and left us to confront the sole execution of the engagements contracted. We set up the new Khedive, and by setting him up we became morally bound to support him; and not only so, but we entered into an actual covenant with the French to support him. The consequence was, having in our hands the effectual control of the Government, and having on the throne a Sovereign whom we had put there, and who had not violated any of his duties, we were bound to sustain him. That is the history of the embarrassments into which we were brought in that country."

So Mr. Gladstone viewed the matter. It was, as he said on another occasion, "honour and plighted faith" that took him to Egypt. For the moment the success of the bombardment spread a sham halo of popularity round the Government. But the resignation of Mr. Bright and the disgust of old-fashioned Liberals who thought with him was a heavy price to pay for a triumphant entrance into a labyrinth of unavoidable obligations and fatal expeditions. Yet British loss was Egyptian gain. In spite of the cholera, the Mahdi, and the foreign consuls, a period of substantial and hitherto unexampled prosperity was inaugurated in the Delta, thanks to the novelty of an honest Administration. United by the principles of Canning and Cobden, Ministers had performed great feats on the mountains of Montenegro and Thessaly; they had descended without disgrace the fatal passes of Afghanistan; but the old rope did not hold for the ascent of the Pyramids.

The British Cabinet was not pleased with its new responsibilities. It looked forward to the time when the Egyptian Government might again be self-sufficient, and the Mahdi having inflicted a series of crushing defeats upon the Khedive's forces, it insisted on the withdrawal of Egyptian garrisons from the Soudan, which had already become a source of weakness, and could only have been retained, or rather reconquered, by a large and unproductive expenditure. After a consultation between Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, and Lord Hartington, General Gordon, who, in spite of his recent doings in Basutoland, had a great reputation for dealing with native races, was despatched in January, 1884, with orders to effect the evacuation of the Soudan.* He was to do this with all speed, and without the aid of British troops. How, instead of carrying out his instructions, he attempted to re-establish an Egyptian Empire, how ultimately he was besieged in Khartoum, how the English Government was at length compelled by public opinion to send out the

**General Gordon's Mission, 1884.**

* "General Gordon went not for the purpose of reconquering the Soudan or of persuading the chiefs of the Soudan again to submit themselves to the Egyptian Government. He went for the double purpose of evacuating the country by the extrication of the Egyptian garrisons, and reconstituting it by giving back to those chiefs their ancestral powers, which had been withdrawn or suspended during the period of the Egyptian Government." Mr. Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons, February 23rd, 1885.

relief expedition under Lord Wolseley, and how that expedition, after much loss of blood and treasure, failed when it was on the point of success, are details in a melancholy story which hardly falls within the scope of this biography. One theory, that Khartoum was not betrayed, but starved into surrender, has been repeated so often, that the passage in which Mr. Gladstone exposed its absurdity is worthy of quotation :—

"Generally speaking, the accounts sent by General Gordon made no reference to the scarcity of provisions; but, on the contrary, held out an expectation that the provisions were abundant. For example, in the telegram of the 24th August, 1884, which reached us on the 25th November, he says: 'We have provisions for five months, and hope to get in more.' But on the 14th of December came a telegram of a verbal statement, believed to be trustworthy, which was given by a messenger sent from General Gordon. General Gordon wrote on a slip of paper: 'Khartoum all right.' But the messenger who brought this message said: 'Our troops in Khartoum are suffering from lack of provisions. Food we still have is little—some grain and biscuit.' . . . But that scarcity was relieved. Subsequently to this we saw that the steamers of General Gordon had made successful foraging raids and brought provisions into the town. And we had from General Lord Wolseley this passage on the 11th of January. He gives an account saying that: 'The messenger who left Corti on the 18th of December with letters for Gordon has just returned. He was one day in Khartoum, and left it on the 28th of December.' And what was his report?—'Gordon was in perfect health, and the troops on the five steamers he saw were well and happy. The steamers seize cattle and grain, and take them up the river to Khartoum.' The date from Khartoum is the 28th of December, fourteen days after General Gordon had very prudently and properly intimated that there had begun to be a scarcity of provisions."

The extraordinary emotion excited by the death of Gordon was always a puzzle to Mr. Gladstone, who contrasted it with the comparative indifference displayed at the death of Cavagnari in Afghanistan. But the personal valour of the officer blinded the public to his disobedience; and the popular feeling which had forced reluctant Ministers to lavish hundreds of lives and millions of money on his rescue covered them with unpopularity when a stroke of fate ended a life of Quixotic heroism. The Nemesis which attends constitutional incapacity to obey orders waited also—and perhaps fittingly—upon the Government which had selected such a man for such a mission.

The Session of 1885 was taken up mainly with the passage of the Redistribution Bill and with a series of votes of censure upon the Government for its Egyptian policy, from which it escaped by very narrow majorities. In the matter of the Penj-deh dispute about the boundaries of Russia and Afghanistan, Mr. Gladstone's resolute attitude saved the country from a great war. Towards the end of March, he moved a vote of credit for eleven millions in a speech of grave and impressive eloquence, which carried the whole House of Commons with him and induced it to assent in silence. Then at length the Russian Government gave way, and peace was preserved. This was the last important act of Mr. Gladstone's second Administration. On the 8th of June Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's amendment to some unpopular proposals in Mr. Childers' Budget was carried by a majority of twelve votes. Next day the House adjourned until the 12th, when Mr. Gladstone stated that her Majesty had accepted the resignation of the Ministry and had summoned Lord Salisbury to Balmoral.

**Votes of Censure, 1885.**

**Penj-deh.**

F. W. HIRST.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF POPLAR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## MR. GLADSTONE AND HOME RULE, 1885-1892.

Lord Salisbury's First Administration—Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell—Mr. Gladstone already (1885) in favour of an Irish Parliament—"The Radical Programme"—Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain—Mr. Chamberlain and the Nationalists—Emergence of Another Great Cause—Mr. Gladstone's Election Address—Significant References to Irish Government—Divisions in the Liberal Party—Mr. Parnell and Lord Salisbury—In Midlothian Again—A Plea for Unity—Shelving Disestablishment—Mr. Parnell's Strategy—Result of the General Election of 1885—The "Hawarden Kite"—Turning out the Tory Government—A Home Rule Cabinet—The Dissentient Liberals—The First Home Rule Bill—Mr. Chamberlain on his Resignation—Mr. John Morley's Reply—The Land Purchase Bill—The Home Rule Bill Defeated—Mr. Gladstone's Sketches of the Dissentient Leaders—Another General Election, 1886—The Government Resigns—"The Irish Question"—Mr. Gladstone's Optimism—Coercion Again—The Round Table Conference—The Cause Prospering—The Forged Letter—Nationality and Devolution—A Demonstration in Wales—Mitchelstown—"There's no Vacancy"—Mr. Gladstone Renews his Youth—In East Anglia and Scotland—Omens of Victory—The Parnell Divorce—The Newcastle Programme—Parliament Dissolved.

THE treatment of the last section of Mr. Gladstone's political career involves peculiar difficulties. A dissolution of party ties and political associations, unprecedented since the days when Peel broke with Protection, left a long-drawn train of animosities which have scarcely yet submitted to the healing processes of time. Many of the great leaders who fought in the dramatic vicissitudes of 1885-6 still wear in public the emblems of a conflict which both sides profess to regard as fought and won. To study impartiality, to preserve a sense of proportion, to mark in a multiplicity of waves and ripples the ebb and flow of larger movements, is only possible for those who write of the placid past. Wise is the English historian who, like the Roman satirist, confines his scope to those who are in their graves:—

"Quorum Flaminia tegitur cinis atque Latina."

Nevertheless, something may be said for the view that the interests of the reader make up for the deficiencies of the writer; and the indulgence which is conceded to the journalist should in fairness be extended to those who follow closely upon his heels.

**Lord Salisbury's First Administration, 1885.**

The resignation of the Liberal Ministry in the second week of June, 1885, was followed by a few days of negotiation, after which Lord Salisbury, receiving an assurance from Mr. Gladstone that there would be no disposition on the part of the majority to embarrass the Government, consented to form an Administration. Lord Randolph Churchill had made Sir Stafford Northcote's position in the Commons intolerable, and so the Baronet was converted into a Peer. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach became Leader of the House of Commons, and Lord Randolph himself Secretary for India. To all appearances an extraordinary change had come over the Conservative party. Lord Wolseley's suggestion of an

autumn advance on Khartoum was negatived; the evacuation of the Soudan was carried out. In regard to Ireland the change of front was even more remarkable than in Egypt. The appointment of Lord Carnarvon to the Lord Lieutenancy was the signal for the opening of negotiations with Mr. Parnell; and the very Ministers who in opposition had inveighed so bitterly against Mr. Gladstone for the mildness of his coercive legislation, declared on the very first day after the reassembling of Parliament that they had decided to allow the Irish Crimes Act to expire. Some of them went further—so far that, in the judicial language of a distinguished

**Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell.**

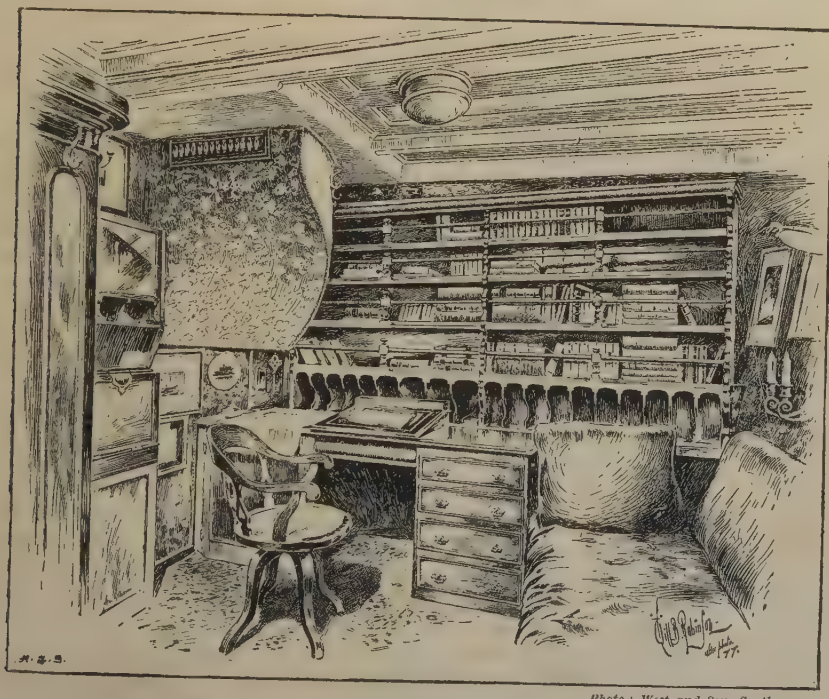


*Photo: West and Son, Southsea.*

SALOON OF *THE SUNBEAM*, AS ARRANGED FOR MR. GLADSTONE'S OCCUPATION.

Liberal Unionist, they "appeared to give countenance to attacks made by Mr. Parnell's followers upon Lord Spencer's Irish administration, with reference particularly to one of the most atrocious cases of murder ever known (the Maamtrasna murders), the perpetrators of which had been convicted and three of them executed." This surrender to Parnell was the subject of a trenchant letter to the *Times* from Mr. Herbert Gladstone, dated "Hawarden Castle, August 10th," which—after a rash challenge to the Conservative and Irish leaders to deny that they had been negotiating—ended with these significant words:—

"For my own part I do not regret what has occurred. The policy of the Tories has given an immeasurable impetus to the demand for the reform of the Irish Government, and for the establishment of a system of government founded upon the will and the trust

of the people, the benefits of which will, I believe, amply repay the country for the damage done to political consistency and morality by the discreditable and cowardly action of the Tory Administration."

On August 8th, three days before this letter was published in the newspapers, Mr. Gladstone himself, with Mrs. Gladstone and his secretary, Mr. Leveson-Gower, had embarked on Sir Thomas Brassey's yacht, *The Sunbeam*, for a cruise on the Norwegian coast. But there is no doubt that the sentence which has been quoted represents the standpoint from which the old campaigner viewed the last development of Tory strategy. An extract from a letter will serve to show that the Home Rule policy was already formed in Mr. Gladstone's mind. The letter was written on October 11th, 1890, by the late Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, and is in the possession of Mr. George Russell, to whom it was addressed:—

**Mr. Gladstone Favours an Irish Parliament, 1885.**

"In 1885, August, I dined—a small party—with W. E. G. in Whitehall Place. I was rather anxious about the course of politics. Chamberlain's programme was out. W. E. G. said, before dinner, 'I need not trouble about that. Ireland was the main question, and C.'s views were not advanced on that. He said he could hardly speak (owing to a hoarseness or weak throat or something): however, after dinner, and the ladies had left, he talked a full half-hour or more. Two important members of his late Government were present. I must not hint at their names (one used to be very loyal to him). They debated the question of the Irish demand for Home Government . . . (1) whether it could be directly responsible to the Imperial Government, or (2) must have a Parliament of their own. He maintained the latter as the only possible means of satisfying the Irish people, who would now be fully represented. When we joined the ladies he threw himself on the sofa, beckoned to me and said: 'Acland, we are come to the break-up of the Liberal Party.'

"I have never named the persons present. But I have frequently told the fact anonymously, to prove that what he proposed in 1886 was a mere act of duty done with his eyes open to the consequences to himself, not, as the wretched scribblers say, to catch votes."

The dinner in Whitehall Place must have been a day or two before Mr. Gladstone joined Sir Thomas Brassey. "The Radical Programme" had appeared in July with a preface by Mr. Chamberlain, welcoming the nine (unsigned) chapters, and commending them "to the careful and impartial judgment of my fellow Radicals." The book, though mainly composed of articles written in the *Fortnightly*, is carefully constructed; and even if principles are subordinated to projects and the fleeting dogmas of Radicalism exalted—by some of the writers—above the permanent truths of the Liberal tradition, still it had the great merit of fulfilling the object proposed for it by Mr. Chamberlain: it provided "a definite and a practical programme for the Radical party."

**"The Radical Programme."**

One whole chapter was devoted to proving that the task of governing Ireland from Dublin Castle and of legislating for her from Westminster was impossible and hopeless; and a scheme of National Councils was outlined by which "Parliament would be relieved of its too great burdens, and national life would have free scope." But the popularity of the programme lay in its proposals for domestic reform, which, taken together, constituted a very powerful appeal to the working-men in the towns, and to the newly enfranchised agricultural labourers. Free Education and the Disestablishment of the National Church, "a doomed institution"; a complete revision of the Land Laws upon the theory that the labourer

is the only indispensable part of an agricultural community; proposals for the State housing of the poor at the expense of the urban landlords;* graduation of the income-tax and rating of ground landlords in towns; the abolition of the House of Lords, unless it abstained from interfering with popular legislation; manhood suffrage and payment of members—all were indispensable items of "The Radical Programme," having been advocated by Mr. Chamberlain for at least three years.† Mr. Gladstone did not conceal, in private, his dislike for the Radical Programme, in which he detected the seeds of State Socialism. Nor had he any reason to condone the principles out of personal liking for their author.

**Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain.**

Mr. Chamberlain's political career had begun with an attack upon his first Administration. Its members were "leaders without a policy and statesmen without principle." They had "selfishness without organisation," and "Liberalism only in name." Their Irish reforms had only been undertaken "as a matter of expediency;" and Mr. Gladstone's election address, in the spring of 1874, was described in the following October as "the meanest public document that has ever in like circumstances proceeded from a statesman of the first rank."‡ Mr. Chamberlain's admission into the Cabinet of 1880 did not have the moderating effect which is usually ascribed to the responsibility of office. The misfortunes of a Government which was not carrying out his policy steadily increased Mr. Chamberlain's influence in the country, until at last, at the beginning of the year 1885, he felt himself strong enough to prepare an unauthorised programme. This proved too much for timid moderates. When "three acres and a cow" appeared above the horizon, many Whigs who had trimmed in the hope of seeing Mr. Gladstone succeeded by Lord Hartington, recognised that the star of Highbury would be in

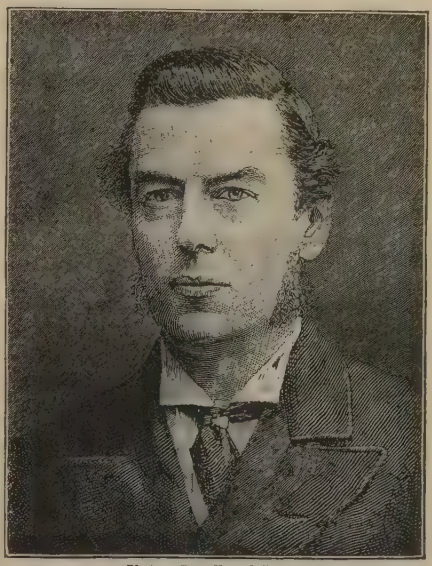


*Photo: Russell and Sons, Baker Street, W.*

MR. CHAMBERLAIN IN THE EARLY 'EIGHTIES.

* See "The Radical Programme," pp. 86, 87, where "the Tory View," the view of Lord Salisbury, that the duty and cost of reparation should be thrown upon the public, is severely attacked. "The alternative proposition which the Radical party will put before the country" is extracted from an article by Mr. Chamberlain in the *Fortnightly Review* for December, 1883:—"The expense of making towns habitable for the toilers who dwell in them must be thrown on the land which their toil makes valuable without any effort on the part of its owners."

† See, for example, Mr. Chamberlain's speech at the Bright celebration in 1883, when, as a Whig writer complained, Royalty and its representatives were held up to the "loud laughter and cheers" and the "renewed laughter and cheers" of a Birmingham audience.

‡ See *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1873, and October, 1874.

the ascendant, and ran their ships hastily on to the Tory beach. There is no exaggeration in saying that in the early summer of 1885 Mr. Chamberlain was the most popular man in the Liberal party, as it is certain that he was the chief terror of the Tories. Mr. Chamberlain, in 1885, like Mr. Bright in 1868, was the sword of Damocles which disturbed the pious slumbers of the parson, the loyal banquets of the squire, and the licensed prosperity of a more convivial interest. Earnest Liberals, dissatisfied with the policy and administration of Mr. Gladstone's last Government, and making too little allowance for the legacy which it had inherited and the unexampled crop of difficulties which it had encountered, were coming to the conclusion that the old leader was "played out," and turning their eyes upon a man whose vigour and ability were unquestioned, whose municipal achievements were unparalleled, whose declarations on foreign policy were unexceptionable,* and whose domestic programme, though tainted with bureaucratic Socialism, was capacious enough to include all that the most optimistic Liberal could either desire or expect within any measurable or reasonable period.

**Mr. Chamberlain and the Nationalists.**

But Mr. Chamberlain had not merely built up for himself a great position in England. He had also endeavoured from the very first appearance of Mr. Parnell to conciliate the support of the Irish Nationalists. It is understood that towards the close of Mr. Gladstone's second Administration—which was notorious for a constant leakage of Cabinet secrets—Mr. Chamberlain proposed a scheme of National Councils for Ireland, which was supported by Mr. Gladstone and all the commoners in the Cabinet. In the spring of 1885 Mr. Parnell arranged that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke should make a political tour in Ireland, and only countermanded the arrangement on finding that Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Carnarvon were prepared to go further than the Radical leaders in the direction of Home Rule.

It is not likely that Mr. Gladstone would have clung much longer to a humdrum leadership. No petty prize could have kept him in the lists. He was, indeed, sensible of the attractions of power; and his imperious nature could not brook the thought that Highbury should be able to challenge Hawarden. But his eagle eye saw the dawn of a new hope, the possibility of rendering to his countrymen a last noble

* Thus, with regard to Egypt, then the criterion of foreign policy:—"I do not think that the democracy will have any love for a policy of intervention and aggression, nor any ambition for conquest and universal dominion. These things lead straight to the conscription, and you will not be eager or even willing to pay the blood-tax which is levied on your brethren in Continental countries. I anticipate, then, that you will give no assistance to the party who are clamouring for what they call a strong foreign policy, and who at this moment, in the interests chiefly of the bond-holders and financial speculators, are calling upon us to take possession of Egypt without regard to the wishes of the population or the just susceptibilities of other nations. We are in Egypt at this time in the pursuance of an unselfish object. Our task has proved of greater magnitude than we had anticipated. But we will not be driven from our intentions. We will not yield one jot either to the perfidious suggestion of dubious friends abroad, or to the interested clamour of financial greed at home; and we will not destroy the independence which we are solemnly pledged to Europe and to Parliament to respect."—Mr. Chamberlain's speech at the Birmingham Artisans' Association, January 5th, 1885.

service. Another great cause worthy of a great champion had emerged into the region of practical politics. The Irish people, enfranchised for the first time in their history, were about to give a vote which would almost certainly be by a vast preponderance for Home Rule. And if that vote were given, Mr. Gladstone had made up his mind in favour of a generous scheme. He believed that a Liberal majority could be secured independently of Mr. Parnell, and he did not choose to bid against Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill in the Irish auction. It was enough for him that English statesmen were preparing English minds for the concession of Ireland's claims. But the conversation with Sir Thomas Acland shows that he did not underestimate the dangers of the policy on which he had set his heart, or the reluctance of Mr. Chamberlain to enlarge the scope of the National Councils scheme. Meanwhile, the Conservative party was thoroughly alarmed, and the Conservative Press was denouncing the surrender to Parnell. Letters poured in from the Carlton asking Ministers, with mingled threats and entreaties, to reassure their followers by declaring against the Repeal of the Union. But the demand met with little response: and under the guidance of Lord Salisbury the Conservative party pushed into the Elections with three inspirations—the support of Mr. Parnell, the infectious courage of Lord Randolph Churchill, and the advertisement of their opposition to Chamberlainism in Church and State. "Mr. Chamberlain is genuine, and the Conservative party is genuine; but anything between the two is hollow," was the cry (soon to be so strangely interpreted by the irony of fate) with which Lord Salisbury led his followers into the battle.

**Emergence of Another Great Cause.**

On September 2nd, 1885, Mr. Gladstone had returned from his trip and was writing, at Fasque, a charming letter of thanks to Hans Jakobsen, who had piloted *The Sunbeam* along the Norwegian coast. After a short stay at Fasque, he returned to Hawarden Castle, whence he issued his long-expected Address to the electors of Midlothian. In an introductory paragraph Mr. Gladstone asked for a renewal of trust from the electors, whose numbers had been so greatly reinforced by the County Franchise Act of 1884. It was obviously not possible, he said, for him to repeat in the new Parliament anything like his labours in the old. But he was too closely associated with the public proceedings of the last six Sessions to withdraw himself from the acquittal or condemnation which was about to be pronounced. Then followed a defence of the legislative work of the Parliament of 1880, in which stress was laid upon the benefits conferred on agriculture, and a contrast drawn in this respect with Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues, who, "inheriting in 1874 a most flourishing finance, left untouched the malt tax, which (except when a Tory Government was in power) Tory orators had always denounced as an intolerable burden." True, the public business of the Empire remained lamentably in arrear. Of these arrears the subjects most important were London Government and Local Government generally, including the liquor traffic and the land laws; "and they could have been effectually dealt with, had not the Tory party unhappily deemed it to be a duty to encounter with the most determined opposition our main attempts to improve the procedure of the House of Commons, and

**Mr. Gladstone's Election Address, 1885.**

our views in favour of multiplying its working powers by a judicious and extensive system of devolution of business to what are known as Grand and Standing Committees." Mr. Gladstone then reminded his constituents of the execution of the Berlin Treaty, and of the improvements which had been brought about in India and South Africa by a policy that had cemented the union of India with the British Crown and averted a war between European and Christian nations in South Africa.

A very long paragraph in the Address was devoted to a review of Egyptian policy and of the events which led in the autumn of 1883, just when there was "a hopeful prospect of an early evacuation of the entire country," to fresh complications in the Soudan. The English Government had only offered aid on the condition of the withdrawal of the Egyptian garrisons from the Soudan by peaceful means.

**Egypt and the Soudan.**

"Lord Hartington has lately and justly stated in general terms that he is not disposed to deny our having fallen into errors of judgment. I will go one step further and admit that we committed such errors, and serious errors too, with cost of treasure and precious lives in the Soudan. For none of these errors were we rebuked by the voice of the Opposition. We were only rebuked, and that incessantly, because we did not commit them with precipitation and because we did not commit other errors greater still. Our mistakes in the Soudan I cannot now state in detail. The task belongs to history. Our responsibility for them cannot be questioned. Yet its character ought not to be misapprehended. We thought the evacuation necessary, wise, and just. The Tories thought it needless and deplorable. Either the country has been saved by the late Government from a most perilous and costly undertaking to which the present Government had striven to commit it, or it has been deprived by us of a noble opportunity which they would have used on its behalf. The principles of opposite policies are here pretty clearly brought out; let the country judge between them."

However, two formidable barriers had now been removed. Egyptian finances had been adjusted and the operations in the Soudan relinquished, and Mr. Gladstone, therefore, took upon himself, "with no intention of cavil or of censure, to express in terms if possible still stronger and clearer than those I have used in Parliament an earnest aspiration for our entire withdrawal from Egyptian territory at the earliest moment which honour will permit."

Procedure, Local Government, Land and Registration all received notice as subjects which called for immediate attention. Next came "ulterior subjects" for legislation and discussion. Since 1832 the House of Lords had been continuously identified with the Conservative party in the State, and Mr. Gladstone could not deny, what Lord Rosebery had begun to assert, that there was a case sufficient to justify important changes. The disestablishment of the Church of England was another question, but a question so vast that it could not become practical until it had been made familiar to the public mind by thorough discussion. As to Free Education he desired to reserve final judgment, but reminded the people that, "according to the habits of this country, a contribution towards the cost of the article tends to its being more thoroughly valued by the receiver." Finally—and in order, as he afterwards wrote, to emphasise the importance of the question—he severed the subject of Ireland from the rest of the Address and from the general subject of Local Government:—

"I have reserved until the close the mention of Ireland. The change just effected in our representative system is felt to have been a large one even in Great Britain, but is of far wider scope in Ireland, where the mass of the people in boroughs as well as counties have for the first time, by the free and almost unsolicited gift of the Legislature, been called to exercise the Parliamentary franchise. They will thus in the coming Parliament have improved means of making known through the Irish members their views and wishes on public affairs. Without doubt we have arrived at an important epoch in her history, which it behoves us to meet in a temper of very serious and dispassionate reflection. Those grievances of Ireland with which we have been historically too familiar before and since the Union have at length been happily removed. . . . But the wants of Ireland have to be considered as well as its grievances."

**Irish Government.**

Ireland had continued greatly in arrear of England and Scotland in respect of the power of local self-government; and he urged that her claims in this regard should not be hindered on account of any premature and prejudicial words which might have been spoken in the acutest—that is, the electioneering—stage of a long and too bitter controversy.

"In my opinion, not now for the first time delivered, the limit is clear within which any desires of Ireland, constitutionally ascertained, may, and beyond which they cannot, receive the assent of Parliament. To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the Empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of that unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people. Subject to this governing principle every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is, in my view, not a source of danger but a means of averting it, and is in the nature of a new guarantee for increased cohesion, happiness, and strength. We have no right to expect that the remedial process in human affairs shall always be greatly shorter than the period of mistakes and misgovernment, and if in the case of Ireland half a century of efforts at redress, not always consistent or sustained, and following upon long ages for which as a whole we blush, have still left something to be attempted, we ought not to wax weary in well doing nor rest until every claim which justice may be found to urge shall have been satisfied. The main question is whether it is for the interests of all the three countries that the thorough and enduring harmony which has now been long established, but only after centuries of manful strife, between England and Scotland, should include Ireland also. My personal answer to the question is this. I believe history and posterity will consign to disgrace the name and memory of every man, be he who he may, and on whichever side of the Channel he may dwell, that having the power to aid in an equitable settlement between Ireland and Great Britain shall use that power not to aid but to prevent or to retard it."

These remarkable sentences were reinforced on November 9th, in the first speech of his Midlothian campaign, when Mr. Gladstone described the subject as one "which goes down to the very roots and foundations of our whole civil and political Constitution," and would probably throw into the shade all other measures, however important and however ripe for action. And yet, oddly enough, this Irish part of the Address excited little attention, and the Liberal leader was afterwards accused of having given no indication to his friends except of Local Government in the sense of County Government for Ireland. Such is the penalty that statesmanship in a democratic country must always pay for prolixity and obscurity. Those who read to the end of the Manifesto did not understand, and those who might have understood did not read to the end.*

The truth is that the Liberal party was too much concerned with

* Mr. Gladstone did, however, consult Mr. Samuel Whitbread about Home Rule, and obtained his approval; and it is believed that he also intimated his intentions to Mr. Goschen.

its own differences in what seemed to be far more immediate and pressing questions. Whig members of Parliament, like Mr. (now Sir William) Marriott, wrote pamphlets to prove that the time had come when Liberals must sever their connection with Mr. Chamberlain and all who gloried in the name of Radical. Significant speeches combating Socialism and land reform had been made by Mr. Goschen * and Lord Hartington. A considerable part of the Midlothian Address was directed to healing the divisions in

**Divisions in the Liberal Party.**

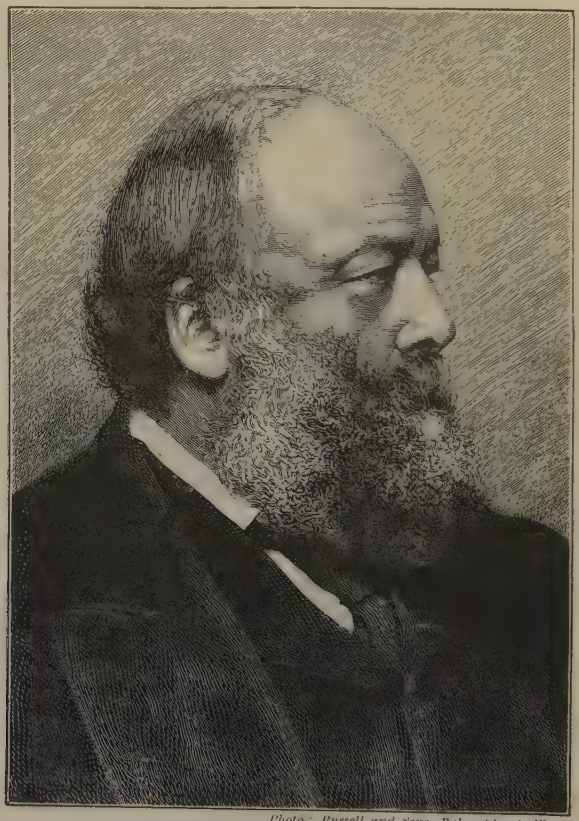


*Photo: Russell and Sons, Baker Street, W.*

THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY IN 1885.

the Liberal party so that it might go into the battle with closed ranks. But Mr. Gladstone was the only leader who could, under any circumstances, have commanded the allegiance of the whole party. Without him, even the higher unity of office could hardly have reconciled Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen with Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. Indeed, it is clear that Mr. Chamberlain had no desire to serve

* Mr. Goschen's opponent for the Eastern division of Edinburgh maintained that the contest was not with Mr. Goschen but with Mr. Chamberlain.

under any leader. On the very eve of the Elections, in the well-known "ransom and insurance" speech at Bradford (October 1st), he said it would be best "to put the Tory-Irish party on the Treasury bench, where they could be carefully watched by the Liberal majority," and forced to promote and carry "the measures which he had advocated and which were called extreme." Four days later Mr. Parnell declared at Wicklow that legislative independence for Ireland would be carried in the next Parliament, and invited English statesmen "to give with a full and open hand." Mr. Chamberlain's offer of a National Council had been conditioned by a proviso that it should have no power to protect Irish against English manufactures. Mr. Gladstone had insisted on Imperial unity. Might not other statesmen come forward with a better offer? Lord Hartington held that Irish Local Government must be "a growth from small beginnings." But it was known that twenty-five English seats would be dependent upon the Nationalist vote; and Lord Salisbury lost no time in answering the touching appeal from Wicklow. He had always felt very strongly that any concession of democratic Local Government to Ireland would be equivalent to Home Rule,* and at Newport, on October 7th, he developed his theory under the stimulus of the Wicklow Convention :—

**Mr. Parnell invites Offers, 1885.**

"If I had spoken three days ago, I should not have said anything more about the Irish matter, but I observed, I think it was yesterday, in the newspapers, a remarkable speech from the Irish leader, in which he referred in so marked a manner to the position of Austria and Hungary, that I gather his words were intended to cover some kind of new proposition, and that some notion of Imperial Federation was floating in his brain. In speaking of Imperial Federation as entirely apart from the Irish Question, I wish to guard myself very carefully. I consider it to be the question of the future. But in the present unformed state of Imperial Federation it is impossible for any man to do more than to keep his mind open to a desire to give effect to aspirations which bear the mark of the truest patriotism upon them, and therefore I wish to avoid any language that may seem to discourage the plan in which, perhaps, the fondest hope of high Imperial greatness for England in the future may be wrapped."

**Lord Salisbury's Response.**

But there is a very much more definite declaration in the speech which would certainly have justified Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill, had they found themselves, with their Parnellite friends, in a clear majority, in giving Ireland a full measure of Home Rule :—

"A local authority is more exposed to the temptation and has more of the facility for enabling a majority to be unjust to the minority, than is the case when the authority derives its sanction and extends its jurisdiction over a wide area. That is one of the weaknesses of local authorities. In a large central authority the wisdom of several parts of the country will correct the folly or the mistakes of one. In a local authority that correction, to a much greater extent, is wanting; and it would be impossible to leave that out of sight in the extension of any such local authority to Ireland." †

Besides keeping an open mind on the subject of Home Rule, Lord Salisbury announced his conviction that Mr. Gladstone was about to disestablish the Anglican Church, and his determination to resist that

* *Cf.* his letter to Sir Frank Lockwood, quoted in Mr. Birrell's Life of Lockwood.

† Some of the most remarkable sentences in this Newport speech did not appear in the *Times* report. Lord Hartington discussed it the next day, and declared that the Government, by their Irish policy, had struck a blow at public morality.

attempt. Mr. Gladstone, however, had no intention of proposing such a measure. He felt that the circumstances were not ripe, and that public opinion was not prepared. In the very first of his Midlothian speeches he made this perfectly plain. To the minds of the mass of the people, he maintained, the question was strange; they had by no means accepted the conviction that the Church ought to be disestablished. The case for a change in the government of Ireland stood in a very different category:—

**In Midlothian again, 1885.**

"I endeavoured on Monday* to point out that it was highly probable that a very great question might arise at the very opening of the new Parliament, in consequence of the altered political circumstances of Ireland, in reference to the government of that country, and that if any such question did arise, it would be of the most profound moment, for it would touch the very foundations of political society in this country and of the United Empire, and that such a question could never be dealt with in a Parliament to the satisfaction of the country unless there were present in that Parliament some party powerful enough to be independent of what is termed the Irish vote. It is certain, according to the opinion on all sides, as far as we have been informed of it, of our opponents as well as our own, that there cannot be such a party in the coming Parliament unless it be a Liberal party."†

For the unity of the Liberal party Mr. Gladstone was labouring with all his heart: "I am labouring for it not on grounds of policy and advantage alone, but on grounds of reason. I say it is reasonable that we should continue to be united, because there is work to be done." "To preach and teach unity" was, in truth, the prime object of the Midlothian campaign. It was, in Mr. Gladstone's eyes, of the first importance to disguise from those who were working in the Liberal cause the almost open conflict which had broken out between Lord Hartington and the Whigs on the one side, and Mr. Chamberlain and his Radical supporters on the other. Himself disliking and distrusting some of the cruder and more Socialistic items of the Birmingham programme, he was prepared to go very much further than Lord Hartington in many directions. The interest of Mr. Gladstone's campaign is therefore mainly strategical. It was a rebuke to extremists and an exhortation to unity. The first day was a series of physical and political triumphs. Leaving Hawarden on the morning of November 9th, the Liberal leader addressed enthusiastic crowds at Chester, where he preached unity; at Wigan, where he discoursed of Franchise Reform; at Preston, where he warned the people against the exploded superstition of Fair Trade; and at Carlisle, where he recognised the responsibilities of leadership and promised to take care that no section of the party should exercise undue predominance; and he wound up the day at Edinburgh with an important reply to an address from the executive committee of the Midlothian Liberal Association, when he devoted himself mainly to Ireland and the absolute necessity for a great Liberal majority over Parnellites and Tories combined. Hitherto the constituency of Ireland had been miserably narrow;

**A Plea for Unity.**

**An Independent Majority Necessary.**

* Mr. Gladstone refers to his speech to the executive committee of the Midlothian Liberal Association, November 9th.

† Speech in the Free Church General Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, November 11th, 1885. Mr. Goschen was on the platform, and was appealed to by Mr. Gladstone, during the "heckling," as one of the greatest authorities on the subject of the taxation of ground rents.

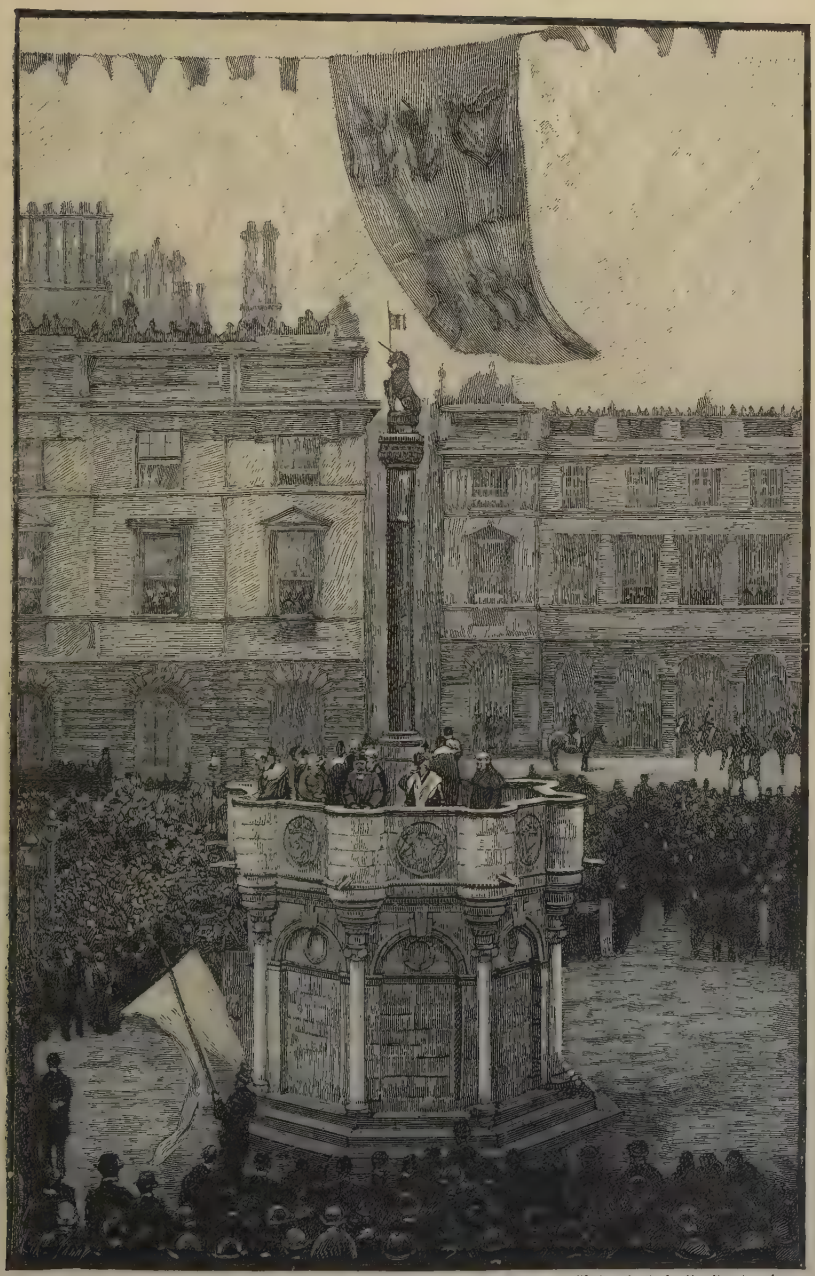


*Photo: A. A. Inglis, Edinburgh.*

THE MARKET CROSS, EDINBURGH, UNVEILED BY MR. GLADSTONE ON 23RD NOVEMBER, 1885.

but the coming Elections would create a new position. It was "a high probability, if not a certainty," that the Nationalists under Mr. Parnell would contribute for the first time a great majority of the Irish representatives, and would be entitled by their numerical strength to speak in the name of the Irish people. It was also probable that Ireland would formulate a demand for self-government. "Her expectations on that subject are large. . . . She may be right or she may be wrong in that respect, but what Ireland may deliberately and constitutionally demand, unless it infringe the principles connected with the honourable maintenance of the unity of the Empire, will be a demand that we are bound, at any rate, to treat with careful attention."

"Let me remind you before I close these remarks that this is a matter of the highest importance. We have had our little arguments, and controversies, and anticipations, and desires, about one question and another question. These are all very well in their way and at their time, but rely upon it that if such a matter comes forward at the outset of the proceedings of the new Parliament as I have described—namely, a demand made constitutionally by the vast majority of the representatives of Ireland for the concession of large local powers of self-government, accompanied with an admission that the unity of the Empire is not to be impaired—the magnitude of that subject and its character will sweep into the shade for the moment all those subjects of ordinary legislation on which I, or on which others, have addressed you, and the satisfactory settlement of that subject, which goes down to the very roots and foundations of our whole civil and political constitution, will become the first duty of the Parliament. A mistake in it, as I have shown you, would be of the most vital consequence."

**Shelving Disestablishment.**

In the four speeches which followed—at Edinburgh on the 11th and 24th of November, at West Calder on the 17th, and at Dalkeith on the 21st—Mr. Gladstone did not go very much further. He dealt, as we have seen, with Disestablishment, and succeeded with extraordinary skill in shelving the question without exasperating that large body of Liberals who placed it first in the category of necessary and desirable reforms. Nevertheless, strong attacks were made upon the Edinburgh speech by Disestablishment Associations. Mr. Gladstone's defence at West Calder is wonderfully subtle. It was of the utmost importance, he admitted, that there should be a severance between Scottish and English Disestablishment. But that would not have justified him in allowing Disestablishment to be made a test question in Scotland; for had that been done, English Liberals would have followed suit. The Election would have been lost, and so Scottish Disestablishment would have been settled by the balance of English opinion.

The deference paid in Scotland to Mr. Gladstone's authority can hardly be exaggerated; but it may be illustrated by an anecdote. A gentleman driving in a public conveyance in Arran heard two men, evidently Paisley weavers, discussing politics. Presently one of them said, with much emphasis, "There hasna been a lawgiver equal to Mr. Gladstone since the days o' Moses." "Moses!" retorted the other, "Moses got the law gi'en tae him frae the Lord; but Mr. Gladstone made laws oot o' his ain head!"

Mr. Gladstone refused to accept Mr. Parnell's suggestion that he should lay before the country a plan for dealing with the future government of Ireland. The wishes of Ireland could not be constitutionally expressed until after the Elections; and only the Government of the country could make an effectual proposal. Mr. Parnell and

his friends thereupon took action which proved ultimately disastrous to the cause they had at heart as well as to Liberalism. They published a Manifesto containing a base appeal to the ignorant prejudices of Irish Roman Catholics, telling them that the Liberal party intended to deprive them of their schools. Mr. Parnell stooped even lower; for he proclaimed that every Irishman who voted for the Liberals was doing his best to deliver his countrymen to imprisonment and death, thus pointing the contrast between Lord Spencer's activity in bringing the Phœnix Park murderers to justice, and the flexibility of the Conservative Government in the Maamtrasna case. On the face of it the Parnellite strategy was both clever and successful. It lost the Liberals about twenty-five seats, and so produced a House of Commons in which the Tories and Parnellites combined had a bare majority of two. But it was the last straw of political immorality. Few Liberals had the magnanimity which, in Mr. Gladstone's case, could forget, in the interests of Ireland, the character and conduct of her representatives. Unscrupulous mendacity and bitter opposition make but a poor overture to the oratorio of good-will and friendship. A *necessitudo sortis* cannot be extemporised in a month, or in six months. Mr. Gladstone's "History of an Idea" rescues Home Rule and its author from the charge of precipitancy, but it does not justify his neglect of political psychology and of the human element of prejudice and passion which controls, if it does not govern, the laws of political association.

Mr. Parnell's Strategy.

Not that Mr. Gladstone altogether forgot this aspect of the problem; for on the last day of November, in acknowledging a complimentary address from the Irish citizens of St. Louis, he complained that—in striking contrast with their acknowledgment of his services—Mr. Parnell had described the Liberals as the party which had consigned the citizens of Ireland to chains, imprisonment, and death; and the result had been the loss of twenty or thirty seats. In answer to the vituperation of the hour he had only to say that the chief motive which had kept him from a long-coveted repose had been the hope that he might render Ireland some further service.

By this time the General Election was nearly over. In spite of Mr. Parnell's Manifesto and internal dissensions the Liberal party had 333 members as against 249 Conservatives in the new Parliament. But eighty-six Parnellites held the balance. In Midlothian, which Mr. Gladstone had won in 1880 by 211, the figures were—Gladstone, 7,879; Dalrymple, 3,245. Scotland went almost solid for Mr. Gladstone and Lord Rosebery. The West Riding of Yorkshire was predominantly Gladstonian. Mr. Chamberlain swept Birmingham and a large part of the Midlands. But Conservative gains in the metropolis, in Lancashire, and in many southern towns proved the popularity of Lord Randolph Churchill.

Result of the General Election, 1885.

All eyes were now turned on Hawarden and Highbury. Just before the Elections, at the suggestion of one of the few advanced Radicals with whom he was on terms of close friendship, Mr. Gladstone, after some hesitation, had invited Mr. Chamberlain to Hawarden; but the conference did not result in any practical understanding. At any rate, so soon as the Elections were over, small caucuses of Gladstonians and Chamberlainites were held at Hawarden and Highbury. Mr. Gladstone

had made up his mind to give Ireland a full-bodied scheme of Home Rule, to satisfy national aspirations which had at last been expressed in a complete and constitutional manner. It is easy after the event for mediocrity to censure genius; it is easy to complain of Mr. Gladstone's delay in unfolding his design. But Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister.

**Waiting for Lord Salisbury.**

Was it to be supposed that he was going to desert Mr. Parnell, whose support had won him many seats in England, and whose continued support might enable him to solve the Irish Question on the lines indicated in his Newport speech? The Newport speech held the field; and until the Conservative Government exhibited its programme, the leader of the Opposition might well prefer to maintain a policy of reserve. Was it fair or wise to assume that Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Lord Carnarvon would burn in the New Year what they had adored in the old? "I had earnestly hoped," wrote Mr. Gladstone in his Address to the electors of Midlothian on February 4th, 1886, "that the late Government might have been enabled to make proposals adequate to the needs of the sister island." Indeed, he had intimated privately his willingness to strengthen Lord Salisbury's hands if he would propound a Home Rule scheme. Unhappily, however, while committing his secret to a few of his immediate adherents, he did not think it necessary to consult all his former colleagues, some of whom were left to gather the information — all the more unpalatable from the slight which accompanied it—from rumour or the Press. On December 17th appeared "the Hawarden Kite," an anonymous paragraph stating that Mr. Gladstone was prepared to deal in a liberal spirit with the demand for Home Rule. This paragraph was based upon information which came direct from Mr. Gladstone himself, though whether he desired that the information should be made public at that moment, is a point that remains in doubt.

*Photo: Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, W.*

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY IN 1886.

The "kite" was a great surprise. The Address to Midlothian in September had given much satisfaction to Lord Hartington, the most unbending of anti-Home Rulers. It had generally been regarded as an old man's Manifesto—verbose and harmless. True, Mr. Gladstone proved afterwards that Home Rule had been ripening in his mind for fifteen years; true, as Mr. John Morley pointed out, the Home Rule Bill might have been read between the lines of the Midlothian Address. But the fact remains that many of his colleagues were not distinctly informed that the idea had

**The "Hawarden Kite."**

ripened, and no one did read the Bill between the lines. "It had been usual," is the not unreasonable complaint of Lord Selborne, "when far less important questions of public or party policy had to be considered, to hold something like a consultation between all the members of the party who had sat in the last Cabinet, or such of them as could be brought together for the purpose." Mr. Gladstone's political friends were certainly not prepared for so sudden a step; but it is possible that their opposition might have been conciliated if their resentment had not been inflamed. Still, Lord Spencer and Lord Granville were consulted before the "kite" was sent up. The publication was premature. Mr. Gladstone referred to it as an "anonymous and irresponsible declaration." On the 20th, Lord Hartington, after a consultation with Mr. Goschen, published a letter stating that no proposals for the legislative independence of Ireland had been submitted to him, and that he saw no reason to change his opinions. On the 21st, Mr. John Morley, who was already heart and soul with Mr. Gladstone, told his constituents at Newcastle that they must view the question of Home Rule calmly and steadily, though, he added, "it would stir passions, and might destroy a great party."

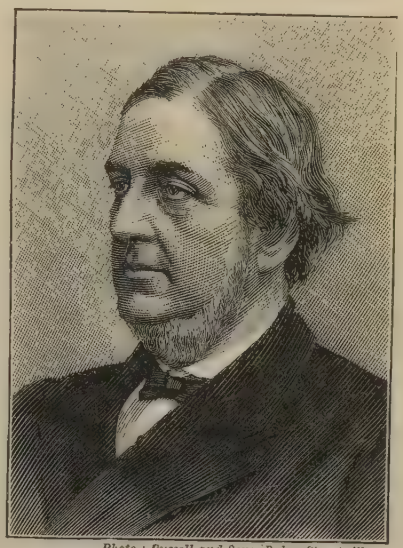


*Photo: Russell and Sons, Baker Street, W.*

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT IN THE 'EIGHTIES.

Mr. Chamberlain, who held that the advanced programme had saved Liberalism, was not pleased with the new turn of events. He was in no hurry to turn out the existing Government, for he wished the Tories "to drink to the dregs the cup of humiliation which they had filled for themselves."* But he soon found that his Radicals would not follow him very far. Mr. Gladstone's supremacy remained unchallengeable within the party; and Mr. Chamberlain, abandoning his idea of keeping the Tories in, decided to have the credit of turning them out. Accordingly, when it became known that the Premier had checked his longing to co-operate with the Irish chief, that he had thrown over Lord Carnarvon and promised coercion in the Queen's Speech, it was Mr. Jesse Collings who despatched the Salisbury Ministry, with an amendment expressing regret that the Government had proposed no measure for providing agricultural labourers with allotments. The amendment was strongly supported by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain, and opposed by Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen; so that on the face of it, at any rate, the Liberal split was brought about by the Unauthorised

**Turning out the Tory Government, 1886.**

* Speech at Birmingham banquet, December 17th, 1885.

Programme, not by the "Hawarden Kite." Mr. Collings's amendment was carried on the 26th of January by a majority of 329 Liberals, Radicals, and Irish Nationalists against 250 Conservatives and Whigs. Mr. Gladstone, who ever since the appearance of the "Hawarden Kite" had been sounding his old colleagues, now approached them with a view to the formation of a Cabinet. It was known from his public utterances as well as from his vote that Lord Hartington would not join a Home Rule Cabinet. Home Rule was equally impossible for Sir Henry James, who had been so bitterly opposed by the Irish at Bury that he had been driven in self-defence to pledge himself to resist their demands. Mr. Gladstone "could not refrain from asking himself inwardly" whether he could again hope for the co-operation of Lord Selborne. That Great Trimmer would not commit himself to opposing the creation of an Irish legislative body for Irish affairs, but insisted on the adequate protection of Irish landlords and the elimination of Irish members from Westminster. According to rumour, Mr. Gladstone's scheme did not admit these two "indispensable conditions"; and Lord Selborne consequently thought that "the difficulties in the way of their future co-operation were likely to be insuperable." Oddly enough, the Home Rule Bill did fulfil these two "indispensable" conditions, and thereby lost the support of Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. (now Sir George) Trevelyan, with whose help the Bill would have been carried through the House of Commons. On February 3rd Mr. Gladstone's Ministry was completely formed. He himself became First Lord of the Treasury, Sir Farrer Herschell Lord Chancellor, Lord Rosebery Foreign Secretary, Sir William Harcourt Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman Secretary for War. Lord Spencer was Lord President of the Council, Mr. John Morley Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Chamberlain President of the Local Government Board, Sir Charles Russell Attorney-General, and Mr. Trevelyan Secretary for Scotland.

Forming a Home Rule Cabinet.

Parliament met on the 18th of February, and was informed that a Home Rule Bill would be introduced early in April. The time which elapsed between the reopening of Parliament and the introduction of the Home Rule Bill was employed by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. John Morley, and the Parliamentary draughtsmen and legal advisers of the Crown, in a hasty collection and comparison of European Constitutions. The Prime Minister was very confident of his power to carry the Bill, at any rate through the House of Commons, and was not inclined to listen to the objections which were raised by Mr. Chamberlain, who had written to him so early as January 30th, saying that he could not see how to reconcile the supremacy of the Imperial with the existence of an Irish Parliament, and was afterwards, therefore, able to show that in joining the Cabinet he had retained "unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection." Accordingly, on March 15th, Mr. Chamberlain wrote to Mr. Gladstone:—

"I gathered from your statements that, although your plans are not fully matured, yet you have come to the conclusion that any extension of Local Government on exclusive lines, including even the creation of a National Council or Councils for purely Irish business, would now be entirely inadequate, and that you are convinced of the necessity for conceding a separate Legislative Assembly for Ireland with full powers to deal with all Irish affairs."

That being so, he desired to be relieved of office. Mr. Gladstone then tried to conciliate his colleague by admitting modifications; but on March 26th the President of the Local Government Board and Mr. Trevelyan, with Mr. Heneage and Mr. Jesse Collings, left the Ministry. Mr. Chamberlain was succeeded by Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Stansfeld, one of the oldest supporters of the principle of nationality, and Mr. Trevelyan by Lord Dalhousie.

Meanwhile, Lord Hartington, Lord Selborne, and other Liberal leaders had taken up an attitude of definite and energetic opposition. They did not, however, echo the reproaches which Lord Randolph Churchill and other unscrupulous politicians were already beginning to hurl at the Prime Minister.

The Seceders.

"Lord Randolph Churchill, an attentive student of Mr. Gladstone's speeches, can find no later date than 1871 in which Mr. Gladstone has spoken strongly against the demands of the Irish people for greater self-government. . . . I think no one who has read or heard, during a long series of years, the declarations of Mr. Gladstone on the question of self-government in Ireland can be surprised at the tone of his present declaration."

Such was the position adopted by Lord Hartington at the Eighty Club on the 8th of March. Another of his colleagues has written on the subject of what he called "Gladstone's sudden conversion":—"I have never myself doubted that on this, as well as other occasions, the motives which had most influence on his conduct—right or wrong, wise or unwise—were higher and more honourable than those of mere personal ambition." An acute analysis follows:—

"The success of the series of measures which he had devised and carried for Ireland, from the Church Act of 1869 to the Land Act of 1881 and the Arrears Act of 1882, had fallen very far short of his hope and expectation. His impatient spirit could not wait for their fruits to ripen by any slow process, especially with his political adversaries in power; his distaste for coercive measures was greater than his respect for law or his appreciation of the necessity of a firm and steady government by law for the equal enjoyment of private rights and liberties. The sands of his life (to use a metaphor of his own) were fast running out; whatever there might be still to do must be done quickly. 'The time,' especially in Ireland, 'was out of joint'; he was 'born to set it right,' and (unlike Hamlet) he liked the task. When he determined to run any great risk in politics, it was not in his nature to feel doubt or misgiving; if one experiment failed, he was so much the readier for another, and was prepared to double the stake at each cast of the die. It is to this state of mind that I trace his new departure in politics at the age of seventy-six, a departure not new as to Ireland only, but, as is proved in the sequel, as to many other questions also." *

Probably there never was a more bewildering political situation. But while his leading colleagues were faltering or deserting, Mr. Gladstone held on his course, trusting on the one hand to the support of an overwhelming majority of Liberals in the country, and on the other to his personal ascendancy in Parliament. April the 8th was the day appointed for the introduction of the Home Rule Bill of 1886. The eagerness to obtain seats for this great historic occasion was so great that members began to arrive before 5.30 a.m., and upwards of sixty breakfasted in Westminster Palace, in order to preserve their places by keeping within the precincts of the House. No such scene had been witnessed in Westminster in living memory. Every corner of the House was crowded; chairs were

First Home Rule Bill Introduced, April 8th, 1886.

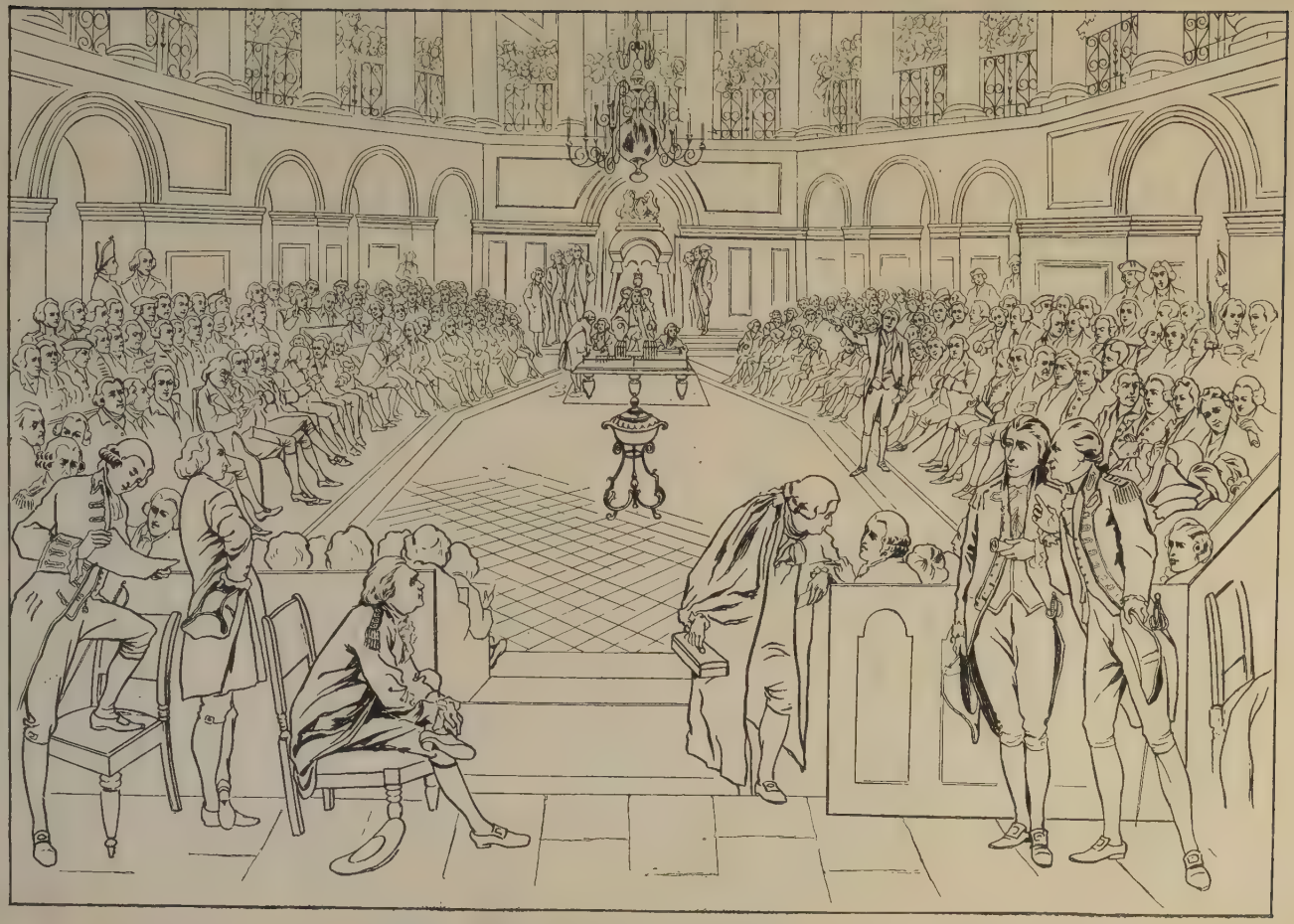
* Lord Selborne's Personal and Political Memories.

placed across the gangway from the Bar to the table, and all the galleries were crammed. And the whole country was, as it were, waiting outside for the telegrams which were to be despatched from the Press Gallery to all parts of the country. Punctually at half-past four Mr. Gladstone entered the House and was received with a magnificent demonstration.

The speech in which he expounded his proposals lasted nearly three hours and a half, for it was almost eight o'clock when he sat down. The Bill provided for the establishment in Dublin of a separate Executive Government dependent upon a separate Legislature sitting in Dublin. Mr. Gladstone's opening sentences showed that his voice was excellent; and he was listened to for the most part with profound and silent attention. Something, he insisted, was imperatively demanded, something must be done. The problem the Government had to face was, "How to reconcile Imperial unity with diversity of Legislatures." Grattan had demanded the continued severance of the Parliaments with a view to the everlasting unity of the Empire. Was that, he asked, an audacious paradox? "No." Norway-Sweden, Austria-Hungary, and our own Colonies provided the answer. It was admitted, even by the Opposition, that a reconstruction of the Irish Government was necessary. How was it to be done, he asked, without giving to Ireland a "domestic Parliament"? The Government's proposal was to establish "a legislative body, sitting in Dublin, for the conduct, both legislative and administrative, of Irish as distinct from Imperial affairs." "There," he added, "is the head and front of our offending;" and the Irishmen expressed their delight. The unity of the Empire must not be placed in jeopardy—and at this declaration some Ulster members broke into scornful laughter. There would be an equitable distribution of Imperial burdens and "reasonable safeguards for the protection of the Protestant minority."

The remainder of this speech falls into three parts. In the first place, could a distinction be drawn between Imperial and domestic affairs? Mr. Gladstone said that this had been found impossible, and announced, amid great sensation, that Irish peers and Irish members would no longer sit in the Imperial Parliament. Secondly, was the fiscal unity of the Empire to be surrendered? Mr. Gladstone laid much anxiety to rest by giving a negative answer. The Irish Parliament, however, would have a "general power of taxation," and the entire proceeds of the Customs and Excise would be handed over for the discharge of Irish obligations.

Then came the question of the powers and constitution of the new legislative body. It would have no power to interfere with the prerogatives of the Crown, and no control over the Army and Navy, the defence of the country, foreign policy, trade, navigation, the currency, the endowment of religious bodies. It would be a body of two orders—a popular order and a less numerous order—which would sit and deliberate together. The twenty-eight Irish Peers now sitting in the House of Lords would "have the option" to form part of the smaller body, with the addition of seventy-five other members, elected by the £25 occupiers for ten years. "It might be thought," said the Prime Minister, "that the Irish peers would decline the honour. I am not of that opinion," he added, amid the laughter of the House and of the peers in the gallery. The 103 Irish members in this House of Commons would form the second order of the new legislative body, and there was much laughter and some



THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS IN 1790.

*(From the Painting by H. Barraud and J. Hayter.)*

satisfaction at the fate thus designed for these distinguished obstructors. To them would be added 101 other members also elected by household suffrage, thus leaving one order of 103 members and another of 204 members. In the event of disagreement, the two orders were to vote apart and the measure voted upon, if not accepted by both, would be suspended for three years, or until after a dissolution.

Such are the bare outlines of a great historic scheme, which is not less remarkable for the ingenuity of the checks and limitations which it imposes than for the generosity with which it delegates large functions of self-government. It satisfied the conditions of Imperial unity as well as the national aspirations of Ireland.

Mr. Gladstone's speech had a very great effect both in the House and in the country. The growth of "Liberal Unionism" seemed to have received a distinct check. On the following night, however, Lord Hartington made a moderate, weighty, and, in some respects, unanswerable indictment of the course of Mr. Gladstone's policy during the last six months. Mr. Chamberlain had much difficulty in showing that he had entered and left the Cabinet on questions of principle. He had himself wished, he said, that the United States should be taken as a model. But, as Mr. John Morley showed, the power to appoint judges (one of Mr. Chamberlain's main objections to the Home Rule Bill) was a State function in the American Union, as it was to be a State function in Ireland. Mr. Chamberlain, however, had another reason for resignation which he wished to explain to the House—his objection to the Land Purchase Scheme which the Government had framed. It was, he said, simply a bribe to Irish landlords, at the risk of the English taxpayer, to acquiesce in Home Rule as they had before acquiesced in Irish Disestablishment. But Mr. Gladstone sprang to his feet, and in very stern tones forbade his late colleague to make use of a permission (which had been specially obtained from her Majesty) to explain his resignation in order to disclose proposals which were still before the Cabinet. It was a painful episode, and not the last of its kind. Mr. Chamberlain was forced, he complained, to fight with his hands behind his back. There was more bitterness than pathos in his grievance. The disappointed author of the unauthorised programme was neither unwilling to wound nor afraid to strike:—

Mr. Chamberlain's Resignation.

"It appears to me that the advantage of a system of federation is that Ireland might, under it, remain an integral portion of the Empire—a scheme of federation having centripetal, and not centrifugal, action. It is the direction in which the democratic movement has made most advance during the present century. My right hon. friend refers to foreign precedents, but surely they are all against him. He did not refer to United Italy. In Italy different nations, different States—which had independent existence for centuries—have been welded into a common country under a common Parliament. And even where federation has been adopted, it has always been a case of federating States which were previously separate. It has been intended to bring nations together, to lessen the causes of difference, and to unite them more closely in a common union. Take the case of Germany, for instance. Germany has been united on a system of federation which has brought together nations which had long before been separate. Take the great case—the greatest of all—of the United States of America. Ah, Sir! there you have the greatest democracy that the world has ever seen, and yet a democracy which has known how to fight in order to maintain its

union. It has fought for and triumphantly maintained the Imperial union of the United States, although it has known also how to respect all local independence. Yes, Sir, and I cannot but remember that in the time of its greatest crisis, when it was in the most terrible moment of its fate, my right hon. friend counselled the disintegration of the United States. [Mr. Gladstone here made a remark which did not reach the Reporters' Gallery.] My right hon. friend says that he did not counsel it. But he lent the weight of his great name to the statement that the Northern and Southern States had become separate nations. No one doubted at that time the sincerity of my right hon. friend—the purity of his motives. Nobody doubts it now, but everybody will admit—I daresay my right hon. friend himself would admit—that in that view of the situation of the United States he made a mistake. Are you certain that he is not making a mistake now?"

*Photo: Russell and Sons, Baker Street, W.*

MR. JOHN MORLEY IN 1886.

This was the first time that Mr. Chamberlain had ever earned the applause of the Tory benches, where affected contempt for a "vestryman" and undisguised hatred of the most powerful advocate of land taxation and "confiscation" had hitherto reigned supreme, undisturbed by a breath of sympathy or a thought of alliance.

The championship of Mr. Gladstone fell into able hands; for on the same evening Mr. Chamberlain's brilliant attack elicited an equally brilliant reply from the new Chief Secretary. "There was one reference," said Mr. John Morley, "to my right hon. friend the Prime Minister which I thought rather unkind. I thought it was a pity that he should have made a reference to what the Prime Minister admits to be a mistaken judgment on a great historic question. But history will judge that mistake very leniently when the record of this century is written, and when on looking back upon Italy, upon Greece, upon Bulgaria, and now upon Ireland, they will know that my right hon. friend has at least played his part in the making of nations." And again, with reference to Mr. Chamberlain's reasons for resigning:—

**Mr. John Morley's Reply to Mr. Chamberlain.**

"The detailed criticisms of my right hon. friend upon the proposals that were laid before the House in a speech of the Prime Minister were worthy of very close and careful attention; but when he said that we were going to exclude trade and navigation from the scope of the domestic Legislature, he laid too much stress upon what is a mere technical term of law. My right hon. friend, after all, went very far, as he himself admits, in the direction in which his right hon. colleagues have proceeded. My right hon. friend admits that his differences with us arose not on these small points of trade and navigation and the like, but because, though he was prepared to go so far as a statutory body with legislative powers sitting in Dublin, he could not consent to that body having under its control, directly or indirectly, such matters as the appointment of judges and the control of Customs and Excise. As to the control of Customs and Excise, we have met my right hon. friend. In

my opinion the election of judges is hardly a point so important, important as it is, as to warrant so serious a step as the breaking-up of a Cabinet, and what looks like the pulverisation of a party."

So much has been necessary to elucidate the new situation, and to show how some of the old leaders of the Liberal party began to transplant themselves to a new soil.

On the 13th of April Mr. Gladstone replied. He was ready to re-consider the proposal about the exclusion of Irish members; but he maintained that his Bill still held and would continue to hold the field:—

**Mr. Gladstone winds up the Debate.**

"This plan has been produced and brought to light under a degree of pressure such as, I believe, never was applied by circumstances to any Government, such, at least, I will venture to say, as there is no case of in the half-century to which my recollection extends. It may be improved by the wisdom of the House; but speaking of it as a plan, it holds the field. It has many enemies, it has not a single rival. It is safe to prophesy that it will continue to hold the field. Many think, and I am one of them, that legislation is in arrear. Until this problem is solved it is idle to think of making real progress with the business of this country, in respect to the important subjects which are perfectly ripe for the handling of Parliament. We have come to the time for decisive action; we have come to the time for throwing aside not only private interests and partial affections, but private devices and partial remedies."

These words give a glimpse into Mr. Gladstone's mind and provide a partial answer to the puzzling question, Why could not a compromise have been arranged between the inventor of the National Council Scheme and the author of the Home Rule Bill?

**The Land Purchase Bill.**

On the 16th, Mr. Gladstone introduced his new Irish Land Purchase Bill, which contemplated the issue of fifty millions of 3 per cent. stock for the purpose of buying up the estates of those landlords who were willing to sell their lands at a cost of from twenty to twenty-five years' purchase on the net value of the judicial rent, after certain deductions. Rents would be collected by a British Receiver-General, and the interest on the loan was to be a first charge on the Irish Revenue. The scheme was probably safe, certainly moderate and fair. But it was not popular, and suspicious minds were impressed by a suggestion thrown out by Mr. Chamberlain that the Irish tenants would speedily elect an authority pledged to an early repudiation of what they would describe as "the English tribute."* On the 19th, Parliament adjourned, and the agitation against Home Rule, which had already been begun at a large meeting in London,† was carried on with much vigour by Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, and the Conservative leaders. On the other hand, the Home Rule Bill was very favourably received in Ireland, and the Liberal organisations in Great Britain were slowly making up their minds to support the Government. It was thought that the Radical "cave" would soon be uninhabitable. Mr. Chamberlain saw himself deserted by the Caucus; and on the 21st of April, while reiterating his objection to the Land

* On March 17th, 1887, at a dinner to the Liberal members for Yorkshire, Mr. Gladstone spoke of the Land Purchase Bill as a main reason for the Liberal disaster in the 1886 Elections.

† At Her Majesty's Opera House, April 14th. Lord Hartington, Lord Salisbury, Mr. Goschen, Lord Cowper, and Lord Fife were the principal speakers.

Purchase scheme, he intimated to the Birmingham Liberal Association that his opposition to the Home Rule Bill was conditional, and might disappear if the representation of Ireland at Westminster were maintained. Mr. John Morley, Earl Spencer, and the Marquis of Ripon spoke vigorously at meetings in various parts of the country in favour of the Home Rule Bill. On the 1st of May Mr. Gladstone issued a letter from Hawarden to his Midlothian constituents in lieu of taking an active part in the campaign. "Age grows upon me, and I am obliged to reserve my limited power of voice for any effort which may be required in the House of Commons. I therefore use my pen to revert to the subject which I opened in my Address to you last September." His new measure, he said, "could not have met with the warm approval of the country unless it had been felt that the principle of local autonomy or Home Rule for Ireland is reasonable: and that the demands of Imperial unity have at least been carefully studied." He laid great stress upon the favour with which the Bill had been received throughout the world. From all parts of the Colonies and America he had received "conclusive assurances that the kindred peoples regard with warm and fraternal sympathy our present effort to settle on an adequate scale, and once for all, the long-vexed and troubled relations between Great Britain and Ireland, which exhibits to us the one and only conspicuous failure of the political genius of our race to confront and master difficulty and to obtain in a reasonable degree the main ends of civilised life."

Meanwhile negotiations were being carried on with Mr. Chamberlain, who was prepared to vote for the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill if it could be so amended as to satisfy him that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament would be maintained. But the speech of May 10th, in which Mr. Gladstone introduced the Second Reading of the Bill, did not meet Mr. Chamberlain's views, and he at once expressed his dissatisfaction and disappointment. But Mr. Chamberlain was far more opposed to Lord Hartington and Lord Salisbury, even on the Irish question, than to Mr. Gladstone; for Lord Hartington's alternative was coercion "as in 1881," and Lord Salisbury's was "twenty years of resolute government."* Throughout the month of May the most intense excitement prevailed in London. There were constant meetings of Dissentient Liberals and Radicals at Devonshire House and at the London residence of Mr. Chamberlain.

**The Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill.**

On the 27th, at a meeting of 223 members of the Liberal party convened at the Foreign Office, Mr. Gladstone, in a speech of some length, declared his policy. He maintained that by enumerating in the Bill all Imperial subjects and thereby giving the clearest notice to the Irish Legislative Assembly what were the limits of its powers, he had adopted the best and safest principle. But he was quite prepared to modify the 24th and 29th clauses of the Bill in such a way as to entitle the Irish representatives to be invited to Westminster when any of the "reserved" questions arose, or any subject affecting the taxation of

* Lord Salisbury's view of the situation is worth quoting: "I decline to place confidence in a people who are in the habit of using knives and slugs. You would not give free institutions to every nation. You would not give them to Hottentots."—Speech on May 15th, 1886.

Ireland. If the Second Reading was carried he would wind up the Session, withdraw the Bill, and reintroduce it with the necessary amendments in an autumn Session. Two days later the fate of the Bill was settled, for at a meeting convened by Mr. Chamberlain 46 members decided to vote against the Bill, four to abstain, and only three to support the Government. A great impression was made by the reading of a letter from Mr. Bright, whose authority was only second to that of Mr. Gladstone in the Liberal party. Mr. Bright now stated that he would vote against the Second Reading of the Bill. This was a bitter disappointment to the Premier.

On the 4th of June a last but unsuccessful effort was made by Mr. Labouchere and the Radical Home Rulers to induce their former leader to abstain from voting. Had Mr. Chamberlain yielded, the Second Reading might have been carried by one or two votes. The Government would then have asked for a vote of confidence on general grounds, and left Home Rule alone until the autumn. On the 7th the great debate concluded. Mr. Gladstone rose at midnight to make a final appeal, and his peroration was in that lofty and impressive style which few of our great orators have equalled and which even he himself had seldom surpassed. The Government, he said, did not underrate the class prejudices and social forces which were arrayed against them in the new struggle:—

**A Final Appeal.**

"I do not deny that some whom we see against us have caused us by their conscientious action the bitterest disappointment. You have wealth, you have rank, you have station, you have organisation, you have the place of power. What have we? We think that we have the people's heart. We believe and we know that we have the promise of the harvest in the future. As to the people's heart, you may dispute it, and dispute it with perfect sincerity. Let that matter make its own proof. As to the harvest of the future, I doubt if you have so much confidence, and I believe that there is in the heart of many a man who votes against us to-night a profound misgiving, approaching even to a dark conviction, that the end will be as we foresee it and not as you—that the ebbing tide is with you, and the flowing tide is with us. Ireland stands at your bar, expectant, hopeful, almost suppliant. Her words are the words of truth and soberness. She asks a blessed oblivion of the past, and in that oblivion our interest is deeper than even hers. My right hon. friend [Mr. Goschen] asks us to-night to abide by the traditions of which we are the heirs. What traditions? By the Irish traditions? Go into the length and breadth of the world, ransack the literature of all countries, find, if you can, a single verse, a single book—find, I would almost say, as much as a single newspaper article, unless the product of the day, in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation. Are these the traditions by which we are exhorted to stand? No, they are a sad exception to the glory of our country. They are a broad and black spot upon the pages of its history; and what we want to do is to stand by the traditions of which we are the heirs in all matters except in our relation to Ireland, and to make our relation to Ireland conform to the other traditions of our country. So we treat our traditions, so we hail the demand of Ireland for what I may call a blessed oblivion of the past. She asks also a boon for the future, and that boon for the future, unless we are much mistaken, will be a boon to us in respect of honour no less than a boon to her in respect of happiness. Such, Sir, is her prayer. Think, I beseech you, think well, think wisely, think, not for the moment, but for the years that are to come, before you reject this Bill."

It was after one o'clock on the morning of the 8th of June when Mr. Gladstone sat down. In the wildest excitement the House divided, and it was found that the Government had been defeated by a majority

of 30 votes, 229 Liberals voting with Mr. Gladstone, and 93 against. On the one side 313 votes were recorded, on the other 343.

Thus ended disastrously Mr. Gladstone's first attempt to satisfy the political aspirations of Ireland. He seems never to have wavered in the conviction that the course he had adopted was the only right one

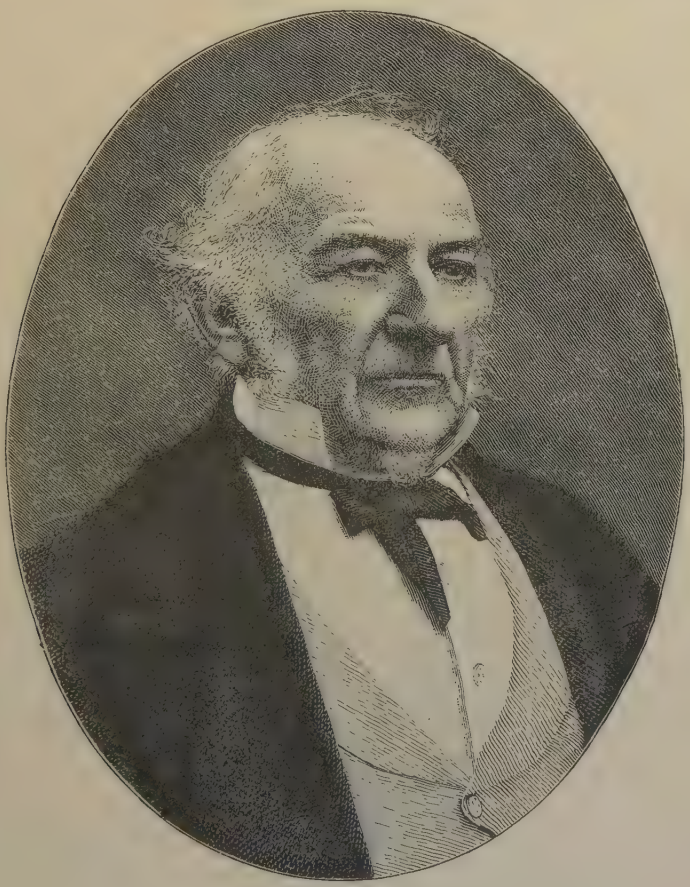


*Photo: Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, W.*

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1886.

to adopt. He had no doubts, and into the regret with which he saw old colleagues leave him at the parting of the ways much pity, but no misgiving, entered. Perhaps the most striking illustration of his attitude may be drawn from his own portrait gallery of the leading Dissentient Liberals. Thus Lord Hartington, "the very flower of truth and honour," was one "who, in obedience to his conscience, and to his conscience alone, rent asunder with pain, and perhaps with agony, ties to which he had been amongst the most faithful of all

**Portrait Gallery of Dissentient Leaders.**

adherents."* Others, too, had fallen into error. There was "that venerable patriot Mr. Bright, a man whose services to his country have been such that they can never be forgotten, whose integrity I revere, whose characteristics I love, and who has conferred upon his country inestimable services which cannot be cancelled and cannot be forgotten"; Mr. Goschen, "a man of very great ability, of remarkable keenness and assiduity, and of unquestioned and unquestionable honour"; the Duke of Westminster, "a princely nobleman, who, in every relation of life, sets a most noble example to every rank of the community in the performance of every description of duty"; and last, but not least, Mr. Chamberlain: "I look with regard and admiration on Mr. Chamberlain's career at Birmingham, and I have never for a moment depreciated the signal abilities of debate which, reared on that comparatively narrow ground, Mr. Chamberlain has since developed in Parliament." At a later date Mr. Gladstone added: "I think, with respect to Mr. Chamberlain, although it is possible that he may have a certain enjoyment in the cushioned ease of that society in which he now mixes with satisfaction, and which exhibits a very just appreciation of his remarkable talents; yet I very much doubt whether Mr. Chamberlain will be able—a young man, I am glad to say, with probably twenty or thirty years before him—to find the means of a comfortable and satisfactory domicile among those 'who toil not, neither do they spin.'"†

The Liberal party in the country was in no condition to face a General Election, but Mr. Gladstone was assured by the "experts" that the people were with him. In any case a stable Government was impossible under existing conditions; and the decision in favour of an immediate appeal to the country was right from a national, however desperate from a party, standpoint. The Election campaign was short but sharp. Mr. John Morley fought with the courage of conviction by the side of Mr. Gladstone. Lord Randolph Churchill, who had been preaching what Mr. Gladstone called "contingent sedition" in Ulster, distinguished himself by the violence of his denunciations. Mr. Parnell and his followers tried to make up by the moderation of their language for a past which was still unpleasantly recent. Mr. Goschen and Lord Hartington were indefatigable. But the man who did most damage to

**Another General Election, 1886.**

* This and the following extracts from speeches delivered in May and June, 1886, have been collated by Mr. Leech in his "Life of Mr. Gladstone Told by Himself."

† Speech at the Memorial Hall, London, July 29th, 1887. The moral certitude and polite compassion which colour these portraits have been admirably set out in a sketch of the artist himself:—"While he was personally so absolutely modest and diffident, he was 'officially' entirely the reverse. No pope, indeed, was ever more infallibly certain and immovable than Mr. Gladstone when once he had become convinced that such or such a course was right and true. It was then 'borne in upon him' as a duty. As the chosen and official leader, for instance, of a free people, he felt that he was the appointed instrument of Heaven, and would act as if ordained to an arch-priesthood which nothing earthly could shake. The contrast between his personal modesty and his 'officially' imperious certitude had one very happy consequence. He allowed those who honestly differed from his conclusions to retain their places in his personal friendship and regard—even though they politically resisted him to the uttermost. He was much too great to resent personally conscientious convictions opposed to his own."—Mr. James Knowles in the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1898.

the Home Rule cause was Mr. Bright, whose attacks upon Mr. Gladstone (whom he spoke of as having "lost his head") aroused much bitterness of feeling.* Mr. Gladstone himself worked with feverish energy. His Manifesto was issued on the 14th June. On the 17th he left St. Pancras Station, with Mrs. Gladstone and his eldest son, for Edinburgh, where he addressed several great meetings. He said that as Inkerman was the soldiers' battle, so was this the people's Election, and he believed that the popular sense of justice would make up for the disaffections in the Liberal ranks. The plans of seceding Liberals were halting, stumbling, ever shifting, ever vanishing. Home Rule and Coercion were the only intelligible alternatives. At Manchester, on the 25th, he admitted that the Land Purchase Bill had been badly received, but declared that it was open to review, reconstruction, or even rejection.† On the 28th he alluded for the first time to the personal attacks of Lord Randolph Churchill, and said that if they could cut out of Lord Randolph half his qualities, with the other half they might make a valuable and distinguished public servant.

The Elections were disastrous to the Government, for the majority of 30 against Home Rule was increased to one of 114. The Cabinet met on the 20th July, and resolved to resign at once. Lord Salisbury, after in vain offering the Premiership to Lord Hartington, was forced to undertake the formation of a Cabinet without the aid of the Liberal Unionists. Lord Randolph Churchill became Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach Chief Secretary.

**The Government Resigns.**

Those who thought that Mr. Gladstone would desert the cause which he had taken up, and plead age as an excuse for withdrawal from the struggle, were quickly undeceived. On August 4th he wrote to Mr. Arnold Morley, the Liberal Whip, that, though he must seek immediate change and repose, and relief from a personal correspondence which had mounted up to 20,000 letters yearly, he was nevertheless willing that his relations with the party should continue as before. And, although towards the end of the month he set off on a visit to Lord Acton at his seat in Bavaria, he left behind him a carefully prepared pamphlet of more than fifty pages in length, as a vacation study for his countrymen—an important contribution, it may be added, not only to political history, but to Gladstonian psychology. It is entitled "The Irish Question," and is divided into two parts, (1) History of an Idea; (2) Lessons of the Election. The work is dated August 19th, 1886, and a postscript, added on August 22nd, deals with the new proposals of the Unionist Ministry, so far as they affected Ireland. "The History of an Idea" recalls the "Chapter of Autobiography." Each was written to checkmate an attempt to assail the cause in the person of the advocate. But there is a contrast as well as a parallel. In the earlier pamphlet, Mr. Gladstone admitted a complete change in opinions and conduct—a change which had dictated resignation "in order to make good my

**"The Irish Question."**

* Mr. Bright's description of the proposed Irish legislature as "a vestry which will be incessantly beating against the bars of its cage, striving to become a Parliament," recalls the best expressions of his prime.

† The scheme was never revived.

title to a new point of departure." But in the case of Home Rule "I have no such change to vindicate; but only to point out the mode in which my language and conduct, governed by uniformity of principle, have simply followed the several stages by which the great question of autonomy for Ireland has been brought to a state of ripeness for practical legislation."

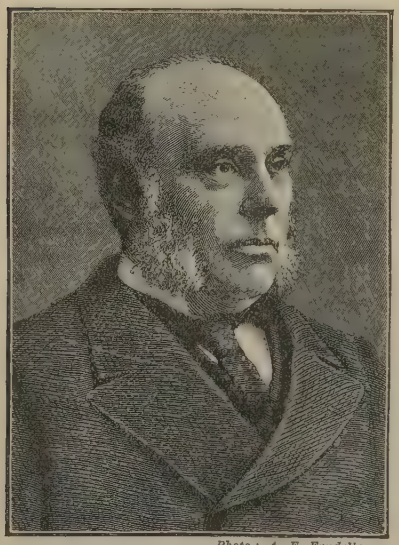


*Photo: A. E. Fradelle.*
W. H. SMITH IN 1886.

But the "History of an Idea" may be dismissed, for it has already been drawn upon in these pages. The "Lesson of the Elections," written immediately after a crushing defeat, is a good specimen of Mr. Gladstone's irrepressible optimism, which began by deceiving himself, went on to deceive others, and often ended by bringing about an otherwise impossible result. Mr. Gladstone's first proposition in August, 1886, was mild and plausible: "At the first moment when Liberalism is again united, it must again become predominant in Parliament." This, however, is a mere introductory truism which helps the sceptic to accept the rest:—

**Mr. Gladstone's Optimism.**

"But our anticipations of its real strength in the future grow more and more confident when we consider how much it is that Toryism, under circumstances of unprecedented advantage, has been able to achieve. It now reckons 316 members of Parliament. That is to say, as against the rest of the House, it is in a minority of thirty-eight; and it is less by nineteen than the Liberal members returned to the last Parliament. It has failed to win from our shattered and disunited party the same moderate amount of success which we obtained against it in November last, when it had the important accidental advantage of the Irish vote. If, with that advantage, it hardly touched the number of 250, and if it cannot obtain a majority of the House when Liberalism is divided against itself in a manner unknown for nearly a century, the inevitable inference, not demonstrable, but very highly probable, seems to be that Toryism can never by its own resources win, under the existing laws, a majority of the House of Commons, unless and until the tendencies and temper of the British nation shall have undergone some novel and considerable change."

By October Mr. Gladstone had returned to Hawarden, and on the 4th of that month, in the course of an address to some Irish deputations, he appealed very happily to the historical works of Mr. Lecky and Mr. Goldwin Smith, and dwelt on the curious circumstance that two of the strongest opponents to Home Rule had, as historians, said the very things which formed the foundation of the Home Rule Bill. He thought that, as neither of these gentlemen was a practised politician, nor a man whose life had been spent under the burden of political responsibility, nor a man whose duty it had been to weigh closely the nature and the consequences of contemplated measures, their countrymen would be justified in preferring their historical dicta to their political judgment.

Mr. Gladstone's seventy-eighth birthday, in December of this year (1886) was celebrated by the congratulations of friends and admirers from all parts of the world, and cheered by the growing difficulties of the Conservative Government, which had so far abstained from Coercion lest repressive measures should put an end to Liberal Unionist support. But the "Plan of Campaign" forced their hands. At the same time dissensions arose in the Cabinet, which led to the resignation of Lord Iddesleigh (followed by his tragic death) and that of Lord Randolph Churchill, whose intended democratic Budget, with its extensive remissions of taxation and sweeping economies, did not meet with the approval of his Tory colleagues. Mr. W. H. Smith became leader of the House of Commons, and Mr. Goschen, whose progress to Conservatism had been very rapid, became Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the following March Mr. Arthur Balfour succeeded Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chief Secretary to Ireland, and the "twenty years of resolute government" began at last.

**Coercion Again.**

Mr. Gladstone started the New Year with renewed vigour. In the *Nineteenth Century* for January he published an article in which he criticised the pessimism of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall, Sixty years After," and took advantage of the approaching Jubilee of the Queen to congratulate his countrymen upon their moral, political, and economic progress during the last half century; and in the February number of the same review, under the title "Notes and Queries on the Irish Demand," he produced many telling arguments for the policy to which he had pledged the remainder of his political life. He reminded those who had joined in the outcry against American subscriptions to the Irish cause, of the example which England had set by subscriptions to the cause of freedom and nationality in Spain, Italy, Greece and Poland. He asked that present methods of governing Ireland should be tested by the truth of the following propositions:—

**Starting the New Year, 1887.**

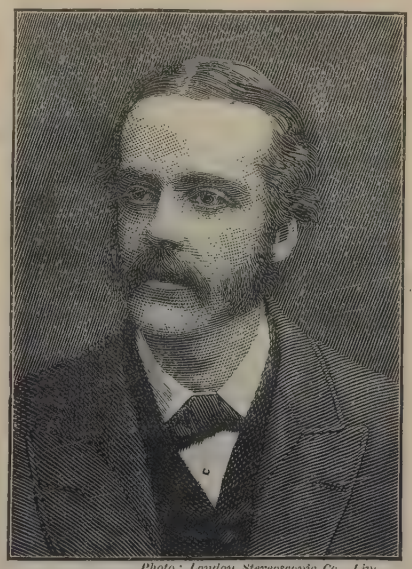


*Photo: London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

MR. ARTHUR BALFOUR IN 1886.

"First, that it is governed at a cost civil and military which, if applied to the Empire generally, not even the wealth of Great Britain could sustain. Next, that we have banished the sons of Ireland wholesale, in this and in preceding generations, to other lands kindlier to them than their own, and the seed thus sown broadcast has grown up into so many centres of adverse foreign opinion. Next, that instead of giving satisfaction to the populations of the two islands, every man on this side the water is discontented with the present relations, while Ireland regards them with a sentiment for which simple discontent is too weak a word. . . . . And, lastly, that by blocking the way with Irish business we have effectually hindered the progress of British legislation, and have now, while

saddling our Parliament with intolerable labours, fallen into arrears, which are also felt to be intolerable."

Finally, what were the compensations for governing Ireland against her will? Were discontent, discredit, and waste, commodities so precious that the people of England should continue to make sacrifices in order to retain them?—

"Is there not a real problem before us, and will not the political genius of this nation, which in every other quarter has, by the removal of discontent, strengthened and not relaxed the bonds of empire, show the world, in the only case that still remains unprovided for, that by carefully acting on the same principles in appropriate form we may be enabled to bring about the same beneficent results?"

These last words were no doubt intended to indicate such a readiness to compromise and conciliation as might have been expected from so great a master of the art of management. Indeed, the times seemed to be fast ripening for a reunion with Mr. Chamberlain. The resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill had removed from the Government by far the most democratic of its members. Mr. Chamberlain himself suggested that, since Unionist Radicals and Home Rulers were agreed on everything except Ireland, and on three points out of four *in* Ireland, they might well confer as to whether the one point of difference must remain essential. "I am convinced," he said, "that sitting round a table, coming together in a spirit of compromise and conciliation, almost any three men, leaders of the Liberal party, although they may hold opposite views upon another branch of the question, would yet be able to arrange some scheme." Mr. Gladstone wrote from Hawarden to Sir William Harcourt that Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Birmingham was an important fact of which due account ought to be taken, and added that he thought, "if handled on all sides in a proper spirit, it ought to lead to what I may term a *modus vivendi* in the Liberal party," or at least "reduce to a minimum the divergencies of opinion upon the Irish Question in its several parts and branches."

**Attempts at Compromise, 1887.**

Thus came about the famous Round Table Conference which, meeting in Sir William Harcourt's house, was presided over by Lord Herschell and attended by Sir William Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir George Trevelyan. When the conference separated on February 14th there was left upon Sir George Trevelyan's mind "no doubt whatever that reunion of the party was thoroughly attainable." But these hopes were speedily dashed by an article published by Mr. Chamberlain in the *Baptist;* and from this time the breach steadily widened until, in the autumn of the same year, the member for Birmingham plainly told his constituents that Ireland (ripe for a National Council in 1885) was not ripe for Home Rule; that Home Rule must be postponed to the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, Scotland, and England successively; and that precedence must also be given to local government for Great Britain and to statutory provision for the safety of life at sea. By this time the Irish policy of the Government was putting a severe strain upon the Liberalism of the Liberal Unionists, and the bye-elections were beginning to show

**The Round Table Conference, 1887.**

**The Cause Prospering.**

that Home Rule was steadily growing in favour. Mr. Balfour's "Jubilee Coercion Act," although coupled with a Land Act admitting leaseholders to the benefits of the Act of 1881, met with strenuous opposition early in 1887. "In my opinion," said Mr. Gladstone, in an eloquent speech on the Second Reading of the Bill, "those who contemplate acts of violence, those to whom the ideas of the dagger and dynamite are familiar, will look with satisfaction on the proceedings of the Government." The prospect of the attainment of a reformed government by constitutional means had almost weaned the Irish people from methods of violence:

**Protesting against Coercion.**

"This Bill tends to drive them back into the arms of those who would incite them to crime; it tends again to induce that temporary indulgence in crime which is the necessary accompaniment of indulgence in oppression. I will have no part in raising this cup to the lips of Ireland. It must be offered to her by other hands. To me it will be honour and happiness enough should I be permitted the smallest share in dashing it to the ground."

A painful chapter in the history of journalism was opened on the 18th of April, just before the division on the Second Reading of the new Coercion Bill, by the reproduction in the *Times* of a letter purporting to have been written by Mr. Parnell to one of his supporters immediately after the Phœnix Park murders. "Though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts," may be quoted as a specimen sentence from the first hoax in the "Parnellism and Crime" series. The letter was at once denounced by Mr. Parnell as "a villainous and barefaced forgery"; it was a desperate weapon, and its employment by the Unionists is the measure of the blind terror with which they contemplated what Lord Salisbury called "the Irish nightmare." The Government refused either to treat the letter and the articles which followed as a breach of privilege, or to accept Mr. Gladstone's motion for a Select Committee. In declining to be driven to the Law Courts, Mr. Parnell and his friends followed the example of Mr. Cobden, who had refused to accept the onus of disproving personal statements made against him in the *Times*, and had scorned any other Court of Appeal than that of public opinion.* The immediate effect of these "disclosures" was to embitter to a degree unknown for many years the relations between political parties. In the House the struggle against Coercion was carried on by the Irish members with passionate persistence, and Mr. Balfour's Crimes Bill was not passed until July. Mr. Gladstone was constantly on his feet in the House of Commons; but the sphere of his most interesting speeches lay outside the House: he had unlimited confidence in his power to reclaim the country.

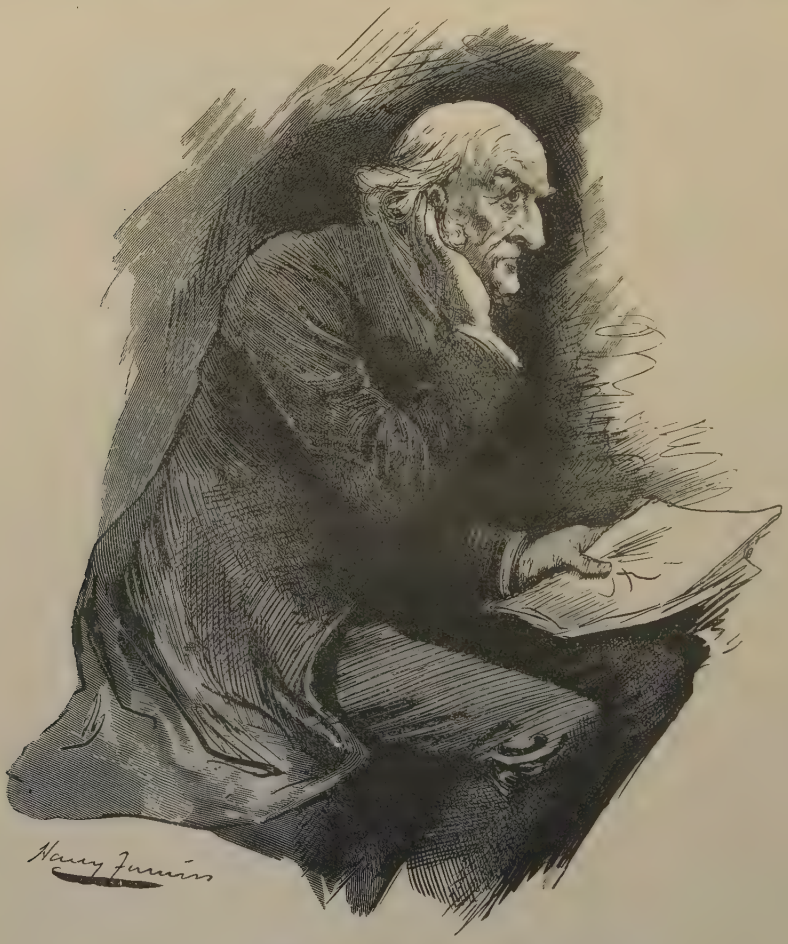
**The Forged Letter, 1887.**

"From the very first, in this question, and many other questions of the greatest importance, resting upon broad principles and upon simple appeals to the human mind and the human conscience, my confidence is reposed mainly in the people. I do not undervalue education and study, and leisure and experience, and all those advantages which many of us possess; but if it be true, as Mr. Schnadhorst thinks, that this approximation is going on amongst the masses of the Liberal party—and I may say that I have

* *Cf.* speech by Mr. John Morley at the annual dinner of the Cobden Club, May 14th, 1887.

much evidence reaching me from day to day that that is the case—so far from being alarmed at such a state of things, I rejoice."

The most striking feature in his political orations during the summer and autumn of 1887 is the logical development which he began to



A SKETCH IN THE HOUSE IN 1888.

admit to the principle of Home Rule. Sympathy with nationality, whether abroad or at home, was indeed one of the most marked characteristics of his mind. The need for the devolution of Parliamentary business had, as we have shown, been seen and appreciated by him for many years. And now, when these developments came crowding into the region of practical politics, the Grand Master of the arts of political management received them with impressive sympathy and ranged them in a formidable

**Nationality and Devolution.**

phalanx to support but *not* to precede Home Rule for Ireland. The Tories were overwhelmed with horror at what they called "separatist" proposals; but the most annoying part of it was Mr. Gladstone's way of introducing such a measure as Welsh Disestablishment, under cover of the patronage of some Liberal Unionist leader. A tremendous speech at Swansea on June 6th affords an admirable specimen of this art:—

"The people of Wales may make mistakes in judging of their own interests, but they are more likely to judge well of their own interests than the people in England, who know little or nothing about them. That is the case in Ireland, and that is the case in Wales. You are very anxious, many of you, most of those I am addressing, regarding what is called the question of Disestablishment. Well, gentlemen, I have had a hand in a piece of Disestablishment myself, and I am going to be very stinted and jejune indeed on this subject with you. I am going to allude to what I call the Hartingtonian principle. Perhaps you will ask me what that is. I will tell you. When Lord Hartington was a leader of the Liberal party in the time of the Beaconsfield Ministry he went into Scotland, and went there, I presume to think, for a more useful purpose than he has gone there for once or twice recently. Lord Hartington was asked about Disestablishment in Scotland, and said that the question whether there should continue to be an Established Church in Scotland ought to be decided according to the views of the Scotch. That is what I call the Hartingtonian principle, and I am thoroughly Hartingtonian in the adoption of that principle, whether it be England or Scotland, or whether it be Wales."

The speech from which these words are taken was delivered to a vast gathering in the grounds of Singleton Abbey, the Swansea residence of Sir Hussey Vivian (afterwards Lord Swansea), with whom Mr. Gladstone was staying. The day was observed as a general holiday in the district, and the collieries and other works were closed. In compliance with a wish, Mr. Gladstone consented to receive members of Liberal Associations from all parts of the Principality, and sixty special trains were provided for those who desired to be present at the demonstration. Deputations also arrived from Cork and Waterford, and in all sixty-two addresses were presented. An immense procession, wearing green and white rosettes, and carrying banners, walked, six deep, to Singleton, and occupied four hours in the march past the platform on which Mr. Gladstone sat in the midst of a large and distinguished company. It is not possible to summarise his speeches during this visit, though they are of extraordinary vigour and interest. But his main proposition was this: "It is a recognition of all the distinctive qualities and the separate parts of the great countries which constitutes a true test of union, and to attempt to centralise them by destroying those local peculiarities is the shallowest philosophy and the worst possible of all practical blunders."

A Demonstration in Wales, 1887.

When, on the following morning (Sunday), Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone attended service in a neighbouring church, the Vicar of Swansea—unless the *Times* reporter be in error—"preached a remarkable sermon from the words, 'Let her own works praise her in the gates.' At great length and with much eloquence the vicar made out a case against Disestablishment, showing the great activity of the Church during recent years in Wales, and the large provision made year by year for the spiritual requirements of the population, and the total failure of the arguments for Disestablishment."

In the recess Mr. Balfour's Irish policy was discredited by the

conduct of the Royal Irish Constabulary at Mitchelstown, when two persons were killed and several others injured by the firing of an unnecessary volley. Henceforth "Remember Mitchelstown!" was a popular watchword on Liberal platforms, and Mr. Gladstone harped upon the subject of police atrocities with an iteration that was often wearisome and sometimes extravagant.*

"Remember Mitchelstown!"

But redundance is not always superfluity, and in large things cultured criticism is generally wrong. Like O'Connell, Gladstone had a true conception of what a great teacher ought to be, and just as many admirers thought that O'Connell overdosed his countrymen with "First flower of the earth" and "hereditary bondsmen," so did fastidious Liberals weary of the Home Rule watchwords. Indeed, there is good reason for thinking that Mr. Gladstone's repetition was conscious and intentional; for in the small edition of O'Rourke's Life of O'Connell, which he has marked and indexed,† a special reference is made under the heading "iteration" to page 272, where a pencil line is drawn along the following quotation from a speech of the Liberator's at the Repeal Association in 1846:—

Iteration's Useful Aid.

"I have often said, and repeated it over and over again, that I had found that it was not sufficient in politics to enunciate a new proposition one, or two times, or three times. I continue to repeat it until it comes back like an echo from the different parts of the country: then I know it is understood, and I leave it to its fate."

A curious scene took place at the annual meeting of the Liberal Federation at Nottingham on the 18th of October. Mischief-makers had spread a rumour that Mr. Gladstone was about to resign the leadership, and, when his arrival was delayed, the delegates began to call out, some for "Morley" and some for "Harcourt"; but the roars of applause with which Mr. Morley's declaration, "There is no vacancy!" was received are still remembered as a spontaneous and irrefutable testimonial to Mr. Gladstone's unapproachable ascendancy. The occasion is also memorable for a speech in which Mr. Asquith made his mark:—

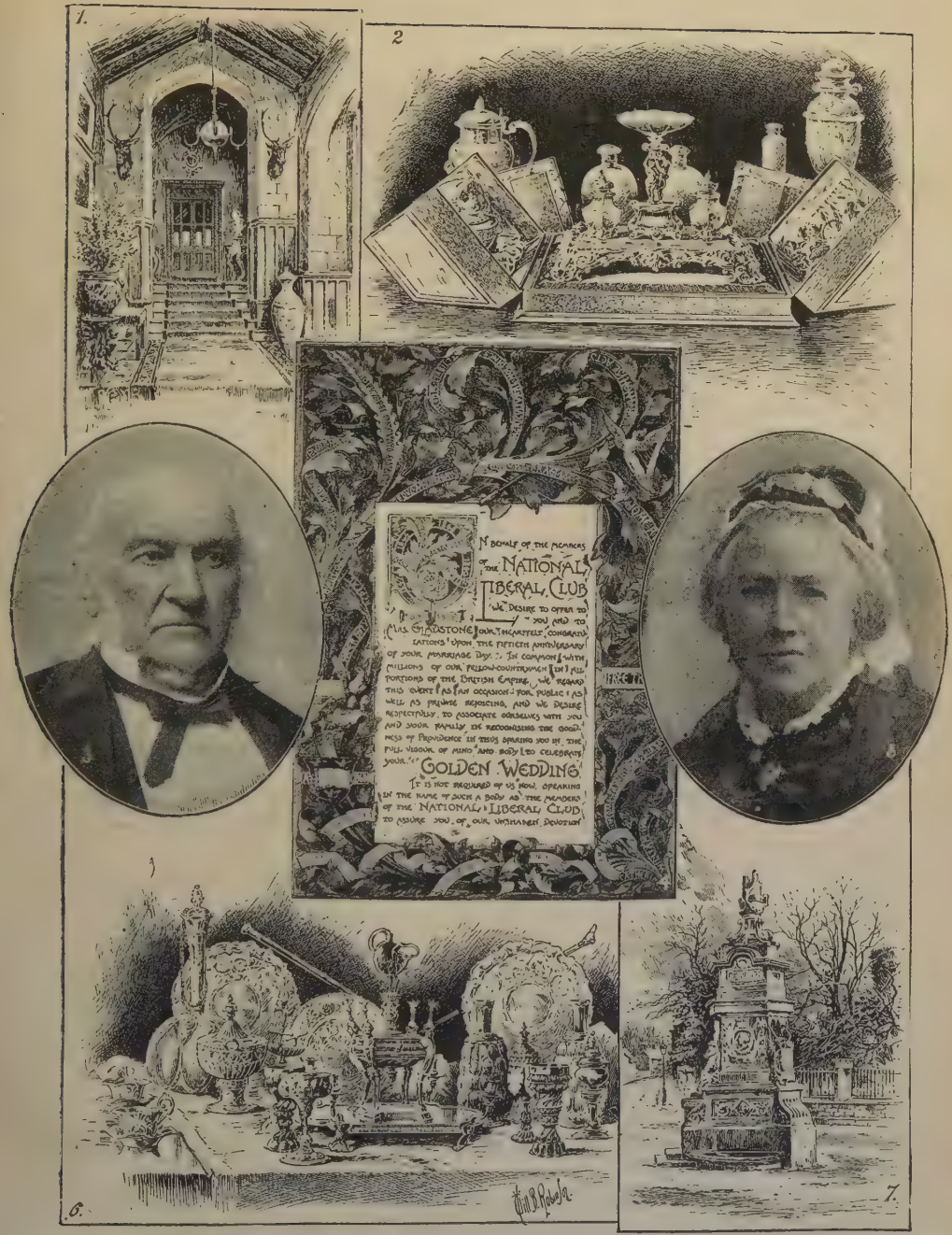
"There is No Vacancy!"

"Speaking as a very humble member of the Liberal party, and unable to bind anybody but himself, he ventured to express the opinion that the limits of reasonable and practicable concessions had been reached. It was a good thing to do what they could to recover the lost sheep, but they might pay too high a price for the capitulation of Birmingham. He was perfectly content to leave the matter in the hands of Mr. Gladstone, whose presence at their head was worth a hundred battalions. To the youngest it was an inspiration, and to the oldest it was an example. To one and all it was a living lesson of devotion, hopefulness, and vitality. Let them rejoice that one survivor of the heroic age of English politics had entered on the last struggle of a life spent on the battle-fields of freedom; and let them, lesser men of a later day, be proud that in such an enterprise, and under such omens, they were permitted to obey his summons and to follow where he led."

Mr. Gladstone's aggressive vitality was spreading dismay among his enemies and wonder among his friends. It was mainly due, no doubt,

* There was also the unfortunate instance of Colonel Dopping.

† I believe in the year 1888, in connection with the very interesting essay on O'Connell in the *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1889.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ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB
WE DESIRE TO OFFER TO YOU AND TO
MRS. GLADSTONE YOUR HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS UPON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR MARRIAGE DAY. IN COMMON WITH MILLIONS OF OUR FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN IN ALL PORTIONS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, WE REGARD THIS EVENT AS FAIR OCCASION FOR PUBLIC AS WELL AS PRIVATE REJOICING, AND WE DESIRE RESPECTFULLY TO ASSOCIATE OURSELVES WITH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY IN RECOGNISING THE GOODNESS OF PROVIDENCE IN THUS BLESSING YOU IN THE FULL VIGOUR OF MIND AND BODY TO CELEBRATE YOUR
GOLDEN WEDDING.
IT IS NOT REQUIRED OF US NOW, SPEAKING IN THE NAME OF SUCH A BODY AS THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB, TO ASSURE YOU OF OUR UNCHANGED DEVOTION
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MEMENTOES OF MR. AND MRS. GLADSTONE'S GOLDEN WEDDING, JULY 25TH, 1889.

1.—Commemoration Porch added to main entrance of Hawarden Castle. 2 and 6.—Golden Wedding Presents (*Photos: Robinson and Thompson, Liverpool*). 3 and 5.—Portraits taken on the Golden Wedding Day (*Photos: Barraud, Lim., Oxford Street, W.*). 4.—First page of Album presented by the National Liberal Club. 7.—Commemoration Drinking Fountain erected in Hawarden Village.

to the attention which he paid to his trusted friend and physician, Sir Andrew Clark, by whose advice he judiciously varied his labours and interspersed them with intervals of repose and relaxation.

**Mr. Gladstone Renews his Youth.**

Dollis Hill, often lent him by his friends Lord and Lady Aberdeen, was a favourite resort; and there many delightful gatherings were adorned by his presence and charmed by his conversation. There, too, many articles were planned and written for the magazines, a learned and speculative leisure dividing itself between the attractions of archæology, theology, and that newer but equally uncertain science of political meteorology which owed its rise to the ingenuity of Mr. Gladstone and its fall to the perversity of fate.* Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, was one of the exceptions to the interdict which "smart" society tried for a time to impose upon Home Rule politicians, and even he experienced some unpleasantnesses. But he bore it all with good humour, and quite enjoyed the polite fiction that Home Rule had been extinguished by the Elections of 1886. On one occasion he told how in the month of July, 1887, he met a lady, "a very kind friend, but who has the misfortune of being a strong Tory. We were talking over the recent speech of Lord Salisbury at the Carlton Club. This lady was very much annoyed that Lord Salisbury should have exhibited great fear of a dissolution. I said, 'Well, it is very unreasonable indeed that he of all people in the world should dread a dissolution. Does not everybody know'—presuming to speak of myself as a symbol of the party—'is it not an established fact that at the General Election twelve months ago I was extinguished?' She said to me with considerable readiness, 'Yes; but you are popping up again.'"

But to tell how Mr. Gladstone "popped up," to give a bare record of his itineraries or a concise abstract of his speeches in these years of Liberal revival would as certainly outrun the limits of the chapter as the patience of its reader. There was a campaign in the Midlands in the autumn of 1888. It was opened by an immense meeting in Bingley Hall; and so great was the enthusiasm that many Liberals thought Birmingham had been reconverted. In the midsummer of the following year came a tour in the West of England, one incident of which may be related, since it will illustrate the general principle that it was unsafe for Pressmen to lose sight of Mr. Gladstone. One sunny day, being free from political engagements, he was persuaded to drive from Bodmin to Tintagel Castle, a distance of about fifteen miles. On arriving at Tintagel, he was taken round the interesting old ruin, and then down to the sea. A few persons who, themselves out of sight, were watching him from above raised a cheer which echoed from rock to rock of the cave. No good-natured greeting was ever heard unacknowledged by Mr. Gladstone. He gravely lifted his hat and bowed to his unseen admirers. When he returned to the village the inhabitants had their congratulatory address duly drawn up. A few words of thanks could not, of course, be withheld, and a few words grew by accretion into a newspaper column about the morning's

**An Autumn Campaign, 1888.**

**An Impromptu Speech, 1889.**

* See Mr. Gladstone's articles on electoral facts in the *Nineteenth Century;* September, 1887, December, 1889, and September, 1891.

news. "I also," wrote a veteran reporter, recalling the incident long afterwards, "had taken a fancy that Tintagel Castle would interest me on this particular afternoon, and therefore happened, pencil and note-book in hand, to find myself at the right hon. gentleman's elbow when he was discoursing to the open-mouthed and entranced country people at this far-off spot. Whatever it may be now, Tintagel was not then blessed with a telegraph wire, and there was no train; but the owner of a fast trotter, determined that the world should next morning know how greatly his native village had been favoured, had his nag between the shafts of a gig a few minutes after Mr. Gladstone had finished perorating; and the speech and the driver and I accomplished the journey together to Bodmin in record time before the post office there had closed its doors."

On the 25th July in this year (1889) Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone celebrated a golden wedding which "was gladdened by the loving presence of family and friends and the innumerable benedictions of well-wishers at a distance."

On the 16th May, 1890, the Liberal leader began a campaign in East Anglia, and this was followed at the end of the month by a series of speeches in Scotland. Mr. Gladstone spoke of the period of danger through which Free Trade was passing, and of "the dreadful militarism which lay like an incubus or a vampire on Europe." There were many "apprehensions" as to his revolutionary tendencies. But the analysts and expert witnesses who pretended to divine them were confounded when on the 1st July in this year (1890) he made a severe attack upon the Government for submitting to Parliament the treaty, or convention, by which Lord Salisbury had ceded Heligoland to Germany. He thought it a constitutional novelty, and denounced it as a dangerous precedent, diminishing the responsibilities of Ministers and impairing a valuable prerogative of the Crown.

In East Anglia and Scotland, 1890.

Meanwhile the popularity of Home Rule was still increasing. Indeed, in 1887 and the two following years, the Liberal party, under Mr. Gladstone's leadership, was making good its losses with astonishing rapidity. New men appeared to fill the gaps. Mr. Arthur Acland and Mr. Herbert Gladstone came to the front about the same time as Mr. Asquith. Sir George Trevelyan had returned to the friends whom he had left with so much reluctance. Liberals were becoming acclimatised to Home Rule. The gains at the bye-elections were constant and sensational. The Parnell Commission Act, which was intended to blast a cause by ruining its advocates, had ended in the spring of 1889 in the exposure of Pigott; and, upon the whole, popular judgment endorsed the claim put forward by Sir Charles Russell, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, on behalf of his client: "This inquiry, intended as a curse, has proved a blessing. Designed, prominently designed, to ruin one man, it has been his vindication." Bright indeed were the prospects of Home Rule when the century entered upon its ninetieth and Mr. Gladstone upon his eighty-first year. But in the autumn of 1890 these fair prospects were clouded. The case of O'Shea *v.* O'Shea and Parnell came before the Courts; and in November the jury found that Mr. Parnell had

Omens of Victory.

committed adultery. "Unscathed by the lance of the enemy," he had fallen a victim, like the dark hero of romance, "to the violence of his own contending passions." Popular opinion, which had eagerly welcomed an incomplete Parliamentary whitewash, felt that the new stain was indelible and unpardonable. Most of Mr. Parnell's followers recognised, though tardily, that the only hope for their cause was to throw over the leader whose strategy and indomitable perseverance had brought them so near to victory. But the man who had courted and won dishonour would not resign the remnants of his power; and had not death come to the rescue, the cause to which Mr. Gladstone had devoted his last years would have been denied even its ineffectual triumph. On March 17th, 1891, in a speech at Hastings, he described what happened:—

A Black Cloud, 1890.

"The Liberals of the country looked forward to the coming crisis. They said 'We are looking for a majority in the next Parliament; that majority, obtained by Liberal agency in this country, will give Home Rule to Ireland. That Home Rule to Ireland, if there had been no disclosures in the Divorce Court, would have been the means of making Mr. Parnell the constitutional ruler of Ireland. The battle comes to issue, and we have to decide whether we still, after these disclosures, will place the constitutional leadership of Ireland in the hands of Mr. Parnell. We will not do it.' I had not to consider in what condition as a party they would give their votes and devote their efforts. My duty was a much simpler one. I was merely the reporter of the general conviction of the party.* I never doubted that that was the conviction of the Liberal party, and of the soundest and best parts of the party. We were ready to face defeat, exclusion, political misfortune, but to create constitutional leadership in Ireland under such guidance the Liberal party were not prepared. What happened next? According to our understanding, we expected the Irish party would have met together and would have voted as to who was to be their leader. I should have thought if there was one thing more absolutely in the nature of a party than another, it was the choice of a leader. A political party not authorised to choose its leader is a contradiction in terms. However, a dispute arose; a different view was taken by the minority of the party, while the majority of the party steadily and finally decided that Mr. Parnell should not be leader of the Irish party."

From this time Home Rule for Ireland was only kept in its place of honour by Mr. Gladstone's personal influence. On the 1st of October, 1891, he gave his blessing to the Newcastle programme, which included Local Option, Payment of Members, Parish Councils, Reform of the Land Laws and Church Disestablishment in Wales and Scotland. But he refused to yield to the Socialistic agitation for an indiscriminate statutory eight hours day, and in the last session of Parliament helped to throw out the Second Reading of a Female Franchise Bill, for which the new "Conservative" leader, Mr. Arthur Balfour, had declared himself. Lord Salisbury dissolved Parliament in the midsummer of 1892, relying upon the divisions among Irish Nationalists and upon an agitation which was being got up among the loyal Protestants of Ulster in order to shake Mr. Gladstone's Nonconformist supporters.

The Newcastle Programme, 1891.

Parliament Dissolved, 1892.

F. W. HIRST.

* Mr. Gladstone refers to a letter written by him to Mr. John Morley on November 24th, 1890, intimating that if Mr. Parnell remained the Irish leader, he himself would have to retire. Read at one of the stormy meetings in Committee Room No. 15, it put an end to Mr. Parnell's leadership.

# CHAPTER XIX.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S FOURTH PREMIERSHIP AND FINAL RETIREMENT, 1892–1897.

The Last Election Address—A Home Rule Majority—Turning out the Salisbury Government—The New Cabinet—Uganda—Depression of Trade and Agriculture—The New Home Rule Bill—The Third Reading Carried—Bimetallism—Egypt—Home Rule in the Lords—The Autumn Session—Resignation Rumours—The Last Speech in the House—A Farewell to Parliamentary Life—Welsh Disestablishment—Literary Pursuits—Armenia and Crete—The Question Summed Up.

ON June 24th, 1892, Mr. Gladstone issued his last election address to his Midlothian constituents. The address contained none of the details of a new Home Rule Bill, but promised a speech "on the outlines of the proposal for which the Liberal party has unitedly contended for the last six years," and attributed the present tranquillity of Ireland to her expectation of a "frank concession of Home Rule, sheltered by Imperial supremacy." For Scotland and Wales "the public sense had conscientiously declared itself against the maintenance of the respective religious Establishments." Mr. Gladstone favoured the establishment of representative licensing authorities, and of a single system of registration. After a declaration in favour of the principle of "one man one vote,"* and a promise to discuss the question of a further limitation of the hours of labour, the manifesto wound up as follows:—

A Last Election Address, 1892.

"In this, the sixtieth year of my political life, I necessarily feel that this must surely be the last General Election at which I can expect to solicit your suffrages, and that now but a small and special share can belong to me in the work I am endeavouring to sketch out. It is, then, an appropriate occasion for assuring you that I am deeply grateful for the confidence which has been heretofore accorded to me by an overwhelming majority of your number, and which I humbly trust I have not forfeited. And even now, closely circumscribed as is the space before me, I trust that if your minds have not changed concerning me, I may still, through the bounty of the Almighty, be permitted to render you for a while imperfect but devoted service."

Under Gladstonian leadership Home Rule still held a first place; and Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury were equally ardent, insisting upon "the terrible importance" of an Election which would turn entirely upon "Separation." Mr. Gladstone's task was extraordinarily difficult. A sudden contagion of Collectivism had infected many of the best workers in the party. His attempt to reconcile sympathy with the ends and disagreement with the means of Socialism, though ingenious, has no permanent value; but the verbal artifice which lubricated the Eight Hours crisis is worthy of quotation:—

Conciliating Collectivists.

"I do not presume to give you a positive opinion; all I can say is what I think. Until universal unanimity prevails, and if there are cases where local unanimity exists, I should

* He also argued strongly (at Gorebridge, July 4th) for State payment of election expenses.

be very glad indeed to see the principle of local option made available, to avoid the difficulty of violent interference with the individual freedom of bodies of men that are unwilling to give it up, and on the other hand to give free scope to the honourable and legitimate aspirations of the miners of a district like this, who value the eight hours day for high social and moral purposes, and who are unanimous in their desire to attain it."

There is the old note of high statesmanship in his reply to "Unionist" arguments: "Have we not, scattered over the world, a number of States, colonial in their origin, but which now have in more than one case swollen to national dimensions? Is it not true that every one of these is subject to the supremacy of Parliament? And I want to know whether you consider that that supremacy is or is not a shadow or a fiction?" Here again is an impressive criticism of oligarchic pretensions:—

**The Argument from the Colonies.**

"You are told that education and enlightenment, that leisure, that high station, that political experience, are arrayed in the opposing camp, and I am sorry to say that to a large extent I cannot deny it. But, gentlemen, though I cannot deny it, I painfully reflect that in almost every one, if not in every one, of the great political controversies of the last fifty years, whether they affected the franchise, whether they affected commerce, whether they affected religion, whether they affected the bad and abominable question of slavery, or whatever subject they touched, these leisured classes, these educated classes, these wealthy classes, these titled classes, have been in the wrong." *

**The Classes.**

The result of the General Election of 1892 was to convert the Unionist majority, reduced by bye-elections from 116 to 66, into a Home Rule majority of 40. It was a bitter disappointment to Mr. Gladstone, who (making too little allowance for the effect of Irish dissensions upon English electors) had confidently calculated on a majority large enough to overawe the House of Lords. His own majority in Midlothian sank to 690. Lord Salisbury did not follow the recent precedents of resigning before Parliament assembled, on the 4th of August. The Queen's Speech was very short; and in the opinion of Liberals it required the insertion of another sentence. "It is her Majesty's hope," so ran the concluding words of the official Speech, "that you will continue to advance in the path of usefulness and beneficent legislation which has been so judiciously followed in previous Sessions." "We feel it, however," added the Opposition, in the Amendment moved by Mr. Asquith, "to be our duty, humbly to submit to your Majesty that it is essential that your Majesty's Government should possess the confidence of this House and of the country, and respectfully to represent to your Majesty that that confidence is not reposed in your present advisers." Mr. Asquith's amendment was supported by both Mr. Justin McCarthy and Mr. John Redmond, who led the larger and the smaller section of Irish Home Rulers; but both demanded pledges that Home Rule should be the first claim on the new Government.

**A Home Rule Majority, 1892.**

**Turning out the Salisbury Government.**

Under these difficult circumstances all the arts of Parliamentary management and persuasion were required. Discordant notes must be harmonised. The sharp competition of rival factions for legislative priority must be translated into the friendly emulation of allies. Cohesion

* Speech at Edinburgh, June 30th, 1892.

must be introduced, or at least diversity disciplined, if the easy triumph of a division was to be followed by the formation of a stable and effective Government

The "old Parliamentary hand" was equal to the emergency. Rising on the 9th of August, he censured the Government for an improper attempt to prolong its life, which had produced an unnecessary debate and proceedings both "singular and anomalous." Ministers might analyse, dissect, explain the majority, but they could not explain it away. This was no time for a declaration of policy on the part of what was about to be a Government, but was at present only "a nebulous hypothesis." Nevertheless he ran sympathetically over the main items of the Newcastle Programme. Then he came to the main part of his subject; and, conscious of its besetting dangers, he adopted the unusual course of reading from a sheet of paper his reply to Mr. Justin McCarthy's interrogations. The question of amnesty must stand over; for as yet he was not "invested with official responsibility." The question of evictions should be considered. For the rest Ireland need feel no apprehensions:—"The question of Ireland is, to me, personally, almost everything. It has been my primary and absorbing interest for the last six or seven years, and so it will continue till the end." The speech, which concluded with a warning to the House of Lords and an impressive appeal to the Unionist party, has been correctly described as a favourable presage for his return to office and power. It was also a striking proof of the priority which Ireland held in all his thoughts. Home Rule was the spring of his policy, the object of his manœuvres, the magnet that prescribed and restricted the sphere of his activity.

The division upon Mr. Asquith's Amendment, taken on the 11th of August, gave the Opposition for the first, and almost for the last, time its full combined majority of forty. Mr. Balfour at once moved the adjournment of the House, and Mr. Gladstone returned to Hawarden for a few days of rest. But his leadership was not quite unquestioned. One morning he received at Hawarden intelligence from London of a movement benevolently "dictated by consideration for his age." The same evening he dined in town, and within a day or two was busily engaged in forming his fourth and last Administration. Age had not impaired his Napoleonic energy. A Cabinet was well and wisely constructed. Mr. John Morley, upon whose counsel and support Mr. Gladstone had come to lean with special confidence, again became Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Rosebery was once more Foreign Secretary, and Sir William Harcourt Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman returned to the War Office, and Mr. (now Sir Henry) Fowler became President of the Local Government Board. Two new men, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Acland, received the important positions of Home Secretary and Vice-President of the Council.

**The Government Defeated.**

**The New Cabinet.**

The Premier gave various proofs of his energy during the Recess. He wrote a paper on Homer, which was read at the Oriental Congress on September 7th. Then he paid a visit to Wales, climbed Snowdon, and made a speech at Barmouth, in which some uncomplimentary remarks about Welsh landlordism gave great offence to a Liberal peer. At the end of the month a Cabinet Council was summoned to consider the

affairs of Uganda and the position of the East Africa Company, which had informed the Government of its insolvency. Shortly afterwards came the announcement of the appointment of a British Commissioner in East Africa. It led to a fresh increase of Imperial responsibilities, and it may be doubted whether the Prime Minister's acquiescence involved his approval.* On October 24th Mr. Gladstone delivered the inaugural Romanes lecture in the Sheldonian theatre at Oxford. It was an impressive scene—the intolerable crush without, the silent crowd within, the red-gowned central figure of Oxford's greatest son as he illustrated with loyal and eloquent erudition the proud saying: *Universitas Oxoniensis æmula Parisiensis.*

Uganda.

Public attention was now divided between Home Rule and the depression of trade and agriculture, which produced as usual a crop of quack remedies. Mr. Chamberlain seized the opportunity to publish a programme dealing with compensation, industrial arbitration, and immigration, and proposing State intervention in many new departments. Mr. Chaplin preached Bimetallism and Protection together. Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour divided the two subjects between them.

Remedies for Depression of Trade.

But Mr. Gladstone was too busy with the new Home Rule Bill to take much notice of these sallies.† The Parliamentary Session of 1893 opened at the end of January. Many subjects for legislation were indicated in the Queen's Speech, but the most important passage ran as follows:—

> "A Bill will be presented to you on the earliest possible occasion, to amend the provision for the government of Ireland. It has been prepared with the desire to afford contentment to the Irish people, important relief to Parliament, and additional securities for the strength and union of the Empire."

The New Home Rule Bill, 1893.

In the Commons the debate on the Address was neither short nor sweet: in the House of Lords, on whose roll of 560 were inscribed the names of just about forty Liberals, divisions had become a mockery, and debates a solemn farce. Ever since 1884 it had been a mere party machine which registered the opinions and responded to the manipulation of the Conservative leaders. But in the Parliament of 1892–95 the absurdity was aggravated by the fact that the Liberal majority in the Commons was small, so that it was easy for the Peers to assume that they had a "mission" from the country to destroy any measure passed through the Commons which harassed vested interests or prejudiced the prospects of their party. Even if a Bill were generally admitted to be good and useful it had to be thrown out, lest a Liberal Government should have the benefit of passing a popular measure. Bitterly must Mr. Gladstone have regretted that Macaulay's letter to Lord Lansdowne‡ had been neglected for half a century; bitterly must he have repented that his own conservatism, or the conservatism of colleagues, had disregarded the practical counsels of Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, and—in the face of annual proofs of a noxious vitality—had accepted or promulgated the superstition that the

* A passage in the Queen's Speech of 1893 shows that evacuation was still intended.

† Nevertheless, on December 3rd, 1892, being presented with the freedom of Liverpool he found time for many interesting reminiscences of the Liverpool of his boyhood.

‡ Sir George Trevelyan's Life of Lord Macaulay, chapter viii.

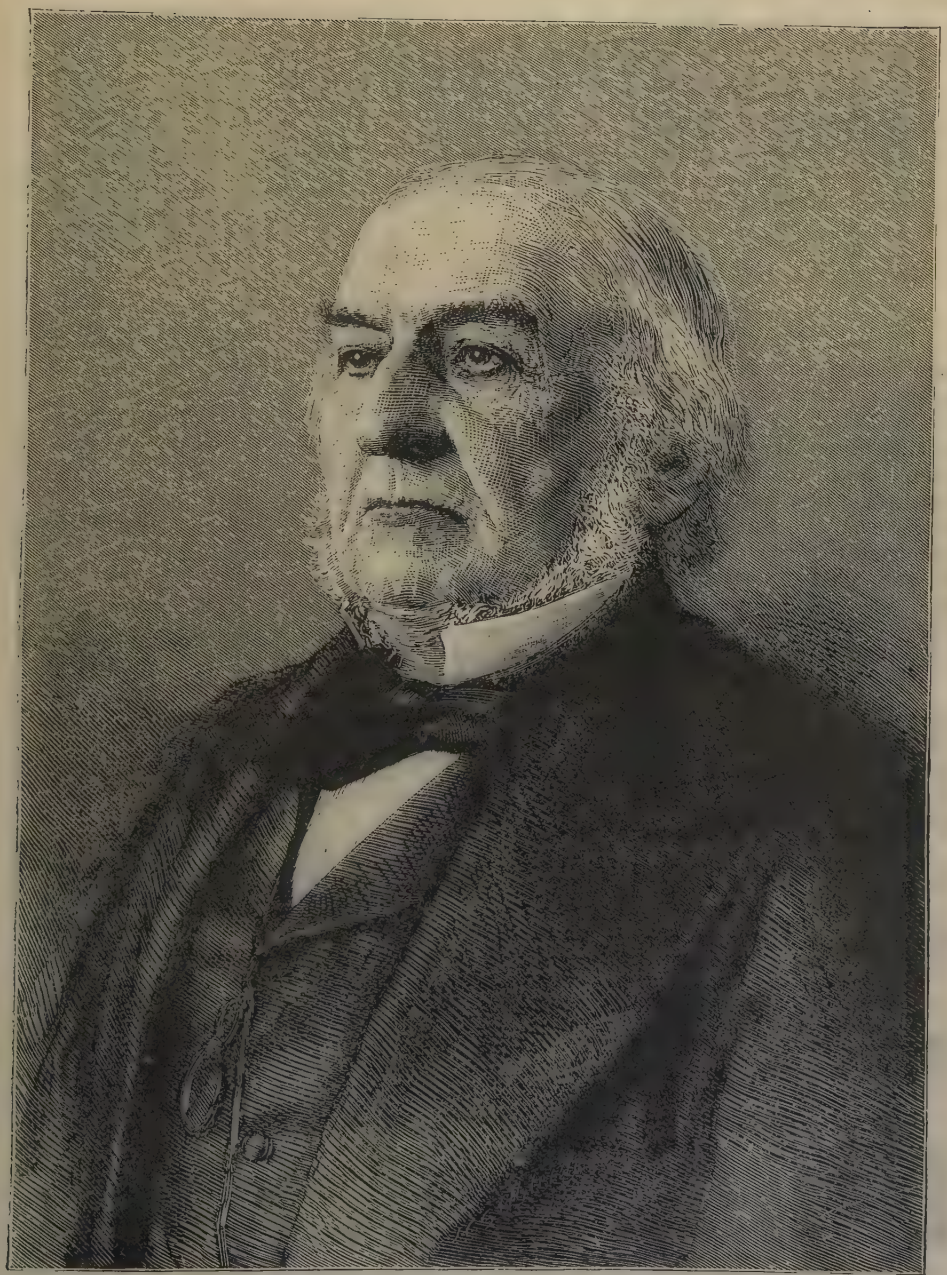


*Photo: Samuel A. Walker.*

W. E. GLADSTONE IN 1892.

surrender on the County Franchise, the battles over the Paper Duties, Army Purchase, Irish Land, and Irish Church Disestablishment, had demonstrated the helplessness of the hereditary Chamber.

"An Upper Chamber which will accept from Ministers whom it detests no measure that has not behind it an irresistible mass of excited public opinion, has, sooner or later, the fate of those Ministers in its hands. For, on the one hand, the friction generated by the process of forcing a Bill through a reluctant House of Lords annoys and scandalises a nation which soon grows tired of having a revolution once a twelvemonth; and, on the other hand, the inability of a Cabinet to conduct through both Houses that continuous flow of legislation which the ever-changing necessities of a country like ours demand, alienates those among its more ardent supporters who take little account of its difficulties, and see only that it is unable to turn its Bills into Acts."

Such was the thesis advanced by Sir George Trevelyan in 1876. Mr Gladstone's Fourth Administration seems to have been designed by Providence for the special and almost exclusive purpose of fixing it in the regions of uncontested and incontestable truth.

On February 13th Mr. Gladstone rose in a full and crowded House to introduce his second Home Rule Bill. Seven added years had brought with them marvellously little change to the figure of the old chief. "Scantier the hair, paler the face, and more furrowed; but the form still erect, the eye flashing, the right hand beating vigorously as of yore on the long-suffering box." The voice was even better than at the close of the 1880–85 Parliament. There was the same power of exposition, the same lucidity, the same sonorous rhythm and stately diction, the same persuasive tone and gesture that had swayed and adorned fourteen Parliaments and a score of Ministries.

Mr. Gladstone began with a powerful argument to show that there was no intermediate course between autonomy and coercion. This had been their contention in 1886. To show the constitutional character of the claim put forward by Ireland, the Premier drove home the simple fact that it was put forward by four-fifths of her representative members.

**The Irish Majority for Home Rule.**

"Those gentlemen opposite seem to have no respect for such a majority as that. Do they recollect, Sir, that never in England has there been such a majority—never once? No Parliament of the last fifty years has come within measurable, or immeasurable, distance of it. In one Parliament of sixty years ago, the Parliament of December, 1832—the first in which I had the honour of sitting—there was by far the greatest majority that ever had been known in our constitutional history. The party of Sir Robert Peel, to which I belonged, did not count, at the outside, more than 150, and would, perhaps, have been more properly estimated at 140, but even that was short—even the majority shown by the smallness of that minority did not reach to the point at which the Irish majority now stands."

The difficulty of the "predominant partner"—the term was invented afterwards by Lord Rosebery—gave another opportunity for the manipulation of figures. Lord Salisbury had spoken of the 1886 verdict as "irrevocable." But two-thirds of the English majority against Home Rule had already vanished, and who would give an effective guarantee for the permanence of the remaining third?

The main change, of course, from the proposals of 1886 lay in the retention of Irish members, but they were to be reduced in number

from 103 to 80, and their right to vote was limited. On the other hand, the Legislative Assembly in Dublin was to consist of 103 members. Its constituency was left unchanged; and its term was fixed at five years. But there was to be a Second Chamber—a Legislative Council:

"Then how do we differentiate this Council, you will justly ask, from the popular Assembly? I may say, first, that we do not differentiate it by qualifications imposed upon the councillors, analogous to the qualifications which used to exist with reference to members of this House, and which, if they existed now, would have deprived us of some amongst our colleagues whose presence we value in the highest degree. We do not propose to adopt that discarded method, but we do this:—In the first place, we take the number, which it is proposed to fix at forty-eight. In the second place, we take the term of the Council, which it is proposed to fix at eight years, the term of the Assembly being a lower term. We then constitute a new constituency for the Council —a constituency which, in the first place, must be associated with a value above £20, and I may say that with that figure we hope to secure an aggregate constituency approaching 170,000."

Into the financial proposals and other details it will not be necessary to enter. It may fairly be said that they were carefully constructed to carry out the intention expressed in the preamble of the Act that an Irish Legislature should be created "without impairing or restricting the supreme authority of Parliament." Ireland, the Premier proceeded, had consented to accept the common universal supremacy of Parliament as provided by the Bill in unequivocal terms,* and he wound up with a pathetic appeal to every section of the House, which has already been given in these pages (p. 514).

The debates upon the Home Rule Bill of 1893 are a recent and painful memory. The Second Reading was moved on the 6th of April, but not until the morning of September 1st was the Third Reading carried, and only then by a free use of the Closure.† The rhetoric of some prominent Unionists was loaded with personal attacks upon Mr. Gladstone, which were all the more furious because he had too much dignity to reply. Mr. Chamberlain's speeches recall the attacks of Mr. Disraeli upon Sir Robert Peel in 1846, and though wit is wanting acidity overflows.‡ Wilful obstruction on the side of the Opposition and constant use of the closure by Ministers embittered parties; and the Session of 1893 was one of the most unpleasant, from the social point of view, in modern Parliamentary experience.§

**The Third Reading Carried.**

In the interstices of the first two months of the Home Rule debate were inserted a Registration Bill introduced by Sir Henry Fowler and Sir

* Clause 2 of the Bill:—"Notwithstanding anything in this Act contained, the supreme power and authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things within the Queen's dominions."

† The majority in favour of the Bill in the final division was 34.

‡ At one moment of excitement Mr. Chamberlain argued that every change made by Mr. Gladstone in the Bill was tamely accepted by the majority, and went on:—"The Prime Minister calls 'black,' and they say 'it is good'; the Prime Minister calls 'white,' and they say 'it is better.' It is always the voice of a god. Never since the time of Herod has there been such slavish adulation." "Judas!" cried the Irish members, and a disgraceful riot followed.—Hansard, July 27th, 1893.

§ In May of this year Mr. Gladstone had a narrow escape from assassination at the hands of a man whose crazy brain was no doubt affected by the prevailing excitement.

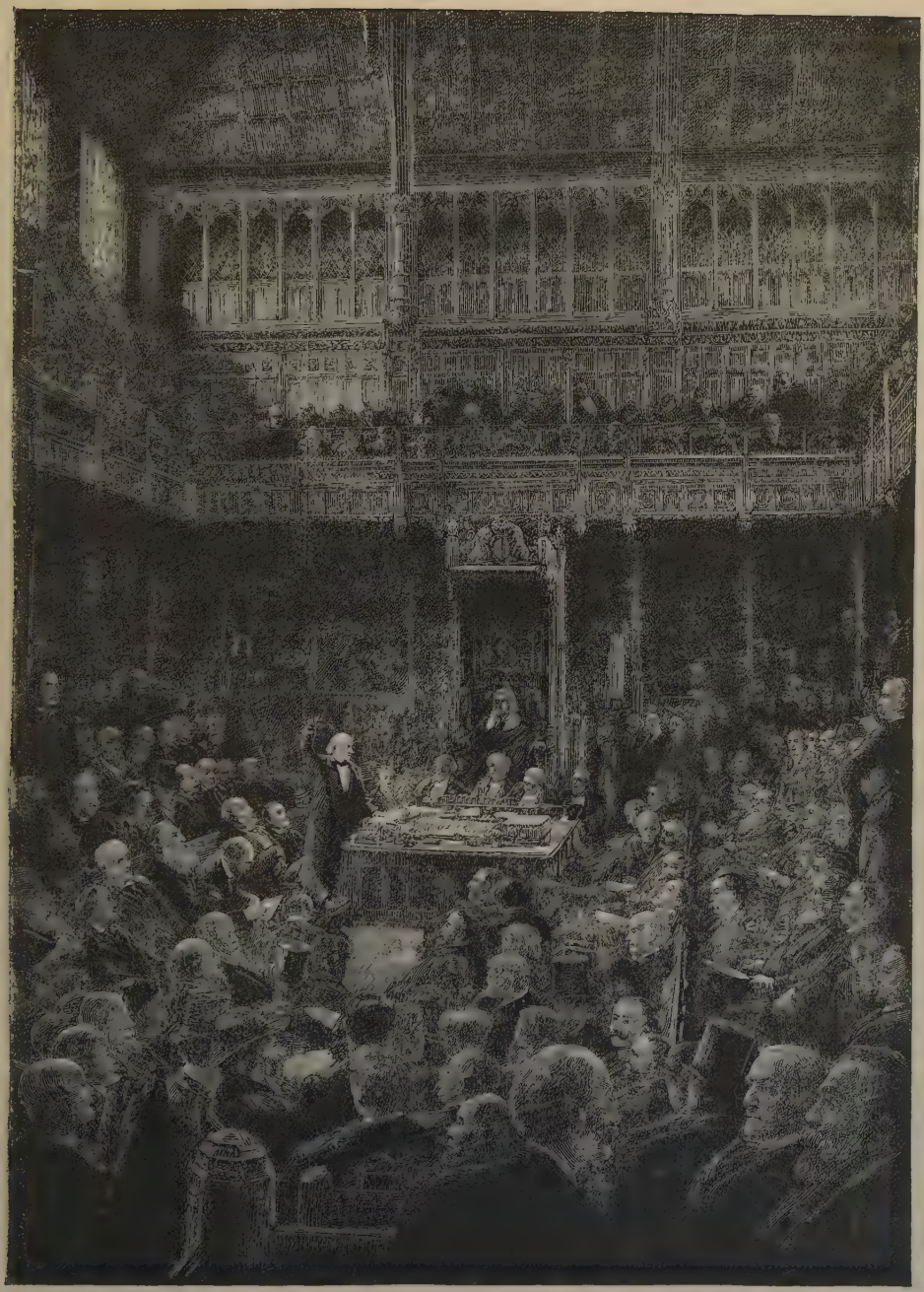
George Trevelyan, an Employers' Liability Bill and a Welsh Church Suspension Bill by Mr. Asquith, a Local Option Bill by Sir William Harcourt, and a Parish Councils Bill by Sir Henry Fowler. On February 28th a debate arose upon the subject of Bimetallism, then a very fashionable disease. Mr. Gladstone himself was no student of currency theories. To him the gold standard was a simple article of faith, as the Establishment is to a Bishop or a thurible to a Ritualist. But in the course of the day it transpired that the bimetallists would appear in astounding strength, that Mr. Goschen was, at least, lukewarm, that Mr. Balfour was warm, and that Mr. Chaplin was red hot. So Mr. Gladstone was approached and prevailed upon to speak. The destructive analysis of the motion with which he began is perhaps the happiest specimen of his Parliamentary dialectic. It is almost perfect. No heavy pieces are dragged up. The lighter artillery is very effective. The motion and the movers are covered with ridicule long before any serious discussion of fixed ratio mintage begins. When he turns to the question of how gold fulfils its function as a standard of value he is less plausible and hardly more profound, though his reliance upon the appreciation of human labour to compensate the depreciation of human food is well-founded. But there is no doubt that his speech accounted for the greatness of the majority against the mildest of bimetallic motions.

**Bimetallism.**

Another and more threatening subject for debate arose out of a Resolution moved by Sir Charles Dilke, in favour of carrying out the many pledges which had been given by successive Ministries with regard to the evacuation of Egypt. It looked as if the debate would damage the Government. Mr. Gladstone saw that the importance of the subject must be minimised. It was necessary to evade and avoid agitation in Egypt and irritation in France. And if the debate went on, angry feelings might be aroused in the party. Little Englanders would be pitted against Imperialists, and honest men against men of honour. The House was crowded, every member was straining his ears lest he should miss a phrase. Some Ministerialists listened eagerly for signs of readiness to quit Egypt; the Opposition was longing for a hint at "scuttle." But there was nothing for anyone. Sheep and wolves looked up, but were not fed. They were told that the occupation of Egypt was in the nature of a burden, and, in given circumstances, of a risk. A permanent occupation would not be agreeable to traditional policy; nor would he contend that the enormous benefits we had conferred could relieve us of our pledges. But the events of January—the young Khedive had been a little restive—made it the exclusive duty of the British Government to consider the means of securing, not only from infraction, but from risk and suspicion, the peace of Egypt. When Mr. Gladstone sat down, after speaking half an hour, "without reference to a note and without faltering for a word," it was felt that the debate was practically defunct. The House thinned and the motion was negatived without a division.

**Evacuation of Egypt, 1893.**

The Home Rule Bill, as we have seen, passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons on the 1st of September. On the 5th of that month it went up to the House of Lords, and a subject which had been before the country for seven years, and before the House of Commons for many weeks, was dismissed by an extraordinary gathering of Peers,



INTRODUCING THE SECOND HOME RULE BILL.

*By permission, from the Painting by R. Ponsonby Staples.*

assembled many of them for the first and last time in their lives for a deliberative purpose, after four days' discussion. The Duke of Devonshire began it with a yawn, the Duke of Argyll added a florid attack on "the great Panjandrum," which Lord Rosebery attributed to the *Lues Gladstoniana*. But neither narcotics nor philippics could affect the stolid determination of this mass meeting of the class which ordinarily conceals its ignorance of State affairs by avoiding them; and on the 8th of September the Second Reading of the Bill was negatived by a majority of 450—491 votes to 41.

Home Rule in the Lords.

In a speech at Edinburgh on September 27th, which is devoted to an indictment of the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone adopted a tone of resigned indignation:—

"For sixty years I have been a witness, and in a small way a participator, in vast legislative changes of the utmost consequence, and very large in number. Now, let me remind you of this. There has not been one among those changes which has originated in the House of Lords, which has been promoted by the House of Lords, which owes its place on the Statute-book to the impartial opinion of the House of Lords. To every one of them that opinion has been adverse, although the manifestation of the opinion may have been prudentially restrained. . . .

"If there is on one side a determined nation, that nation will not be baffled by a phalanx of 500 peers. If the work of the country is done in the House of Commons, if the deliberate will of the nation is expressed in the House of Commons, if the House of Lords are irresponsible, whereas we hold a commission for which we must give an account, then I say we cannot give way to the House of Lords, although they bear high-sounding titles and although they sit in a gilded Chamber."

This may be regarded as the last of Mr. Gladstone's great party speeches in the country.

As his political interests declined, his theological and literary studies took their place. The greater part of his learned leisure was divided between Horace and Bishop Butler, and these studies prevented him from accepting a tempting offer to write about the Old Catholics. The "probability" that Dante had studied at Oxford grew into "a certainty," as he told one correspondent. A letter to another proves that even during his last Premiership he was still a consumer of light fiction. A foolish rumour had been circulated that the original of Mr. Benson's "Dodo" was Miss Margot Tennant, now Mrs. Asquith. What follows is an extract from a letter dated September, 1893, and written to Miss Tennant from Blackcraig, Blairgowrie. It is a delightful specimen of the epistolary style of Mr. Gladstone in his later years:—

"As to 'Dodo,' I am just reading it after delays and doubts. I find it is not known at Balmoral; and at the house of Rabtray (a lovely place), where we were yesterday, when I picked it out of the tray on the table, there was a disposition to treat apologetically the fact of having it within the walls.

"Before I had made progress in the book I absolutely acquitted the author of all, even the faintest, idea of portraiture. 1. It would be too odious. 2. It would be too violent. 3. It would be too absurd. So that I unship and discharge the whole idea with some relief to my mind, for his sake, perhaps, more than yours. Some mere rag of casual resemblance may have been picked off the public road. Do you happen to remember that at one time I used to be identified in caricature through outrageously, extravagantly high shirt collars? Any way, it was so; and I think the illustration, if hardly ornamental, may indicate my meaning. At the same time, I have always held, and held firmly, that anything out of which we can extract criticism or reproof, just or unjust, can be made to yield us profit, and is less dangerous than praise."

Parliament reassembled at the beginning of November, and the autumn session was taken up mainly with Sir Henry Fowler's Parish Councils Bill and Mr. Asquith's Employers' Liability Bill. Both were skilfully piloted through the Lower House; but the Conservative party employed the House of Lords as an agency for destroying the second and maiming the first. But not even yet was the Liberal Government ready to challenge the right of the House of Lords to prevent legislation. Mr. Gladstone was in favour of an appeal to the country, but he would not force a dissolution upon colleagues who would have to bear the brunt of the fight. The Cabinet was not prepared for a constitutional crisis. Mr. Gladstone saw that there was no work left for him to do in Parliament. His disabilities of sight and hearing had increased. He disapproved of an enormous additional expenditure on the Navy,* upon which his colleagues were almost unanimous; he disliked the doctrine of Imperial expansion. The Christmas recess was short. On January 3rd, 1894, the House reassembled, but adjourned on the 12th, leaving the Peers at work on the Parish Councils Bill. On the last day of January, the *Pall Mall Gazette* announced that the Premier, who was then at Biarritz, had "finally decided to resign office almost immediately." An official reply was published, to inform the public that "the statement that Mr. Gladstone has definitely, or has decided at all, on resigning office" was erroneous, although it was true that "for many months past his age and the condition of his sight † and hearing have, in his judgment, made relief from public cares desirable." But the impression that the Premier would take an early opportunity of retiring remained, and was strengthened by the fact that he paid a visit to her Majesty at Buckingham Palace on February 28th. On March 1st he rose in the House of Commons to state that the Cabinet had decided, in order to save "the wreck of a Session's work," to accept the Lords' amendments to the Parish Councils Bill. But they were compelled to accompany that acceptance with the sorrowful declaration that differences, not of a temporary or casual nature merely, but differences of conviction, of prepossession, of mental habit and of fundamental tendency between the House of Lords and the House of Commons appeared to have reached a development such as to create a state of things which could not continue. ‡ After Mr. Balfour's reply the House rapidly emptied, till only a handful of members remained. When the Clerks had left the table, Mr. Gladstone was seen to rise from his place and mount the step at the side of the Speaker's chair. "I wonder what memories he is recalling," said one member to another, as the Premier shaded his eyes with his hand and flashed them in turn on every side. "He is taking his last look at the House." "Nonsense!" said his neighbour incredulously; "he'll soon be back again."

**Rumours of Resignation, January, 1894.**

**Mr. Gladstone's Last Speech in the House.**

* In private he denounced the Naval Estimates as "mad" and "drunk." And on June 7th, 1895, he wrote to a correspondent:—"I go all lengths in denouncing the strain—I should say almost the insane strain—of ideas and opinions with respect to defensive establishments (so called) which has obtained such hold on the public mind. It is well-nigh enough to make their fathers and grandfathers rise out of their graves and walk abroad howling." See *Times*, June 12th, 1895.

† He was successfully operated upon for cataract in the following May.

‡ For passages from this speech see *ante*, pp. 519-20.

On the following day, March 2nd, the Premier's resignation was formally announced, and Lord Rosebery was summoned to Buckingham Palace. "To Home Rule," said the new Premier, "we are bound by every tie of honour and policy." Though there had been a change in men there had been none in measures: "We stand where we did." On March 17th Mr. Gladstone addressed to Sir John Cowan, the chairman of his Midlothian committee, a letter which may be regarded as his farewell to Parliamentary life — a life parallel and subsidiary to a great period of national history: "it has been predominantly a history of emancipation, that is, of enabling man to do his work; of emancipation political, economical, social, moral, intellectual." The subjoined passages, which require no comment, deserve quotation :—

Lord Rosebery succeeds Mr. Gladstone.

A Farewell to Parliamentary Life.

"In reviewing the terms in which you have been pleased to speak of me and of my services, I am careful to distinguish between the colouring which warm and generous feeling in its freshness has supplied, and the merits or demerits of a career certainly chargeable with many errors of judgment, but I hope, on the whole, governed at least by uprightness of intention and by a desire to learn. Strict justice will, I know, deduct largely from what you have said, but there will remain, I am confident, at least as much as I may really deserve . . .

"Another period is opened, and is opening still—a period possibly of yet greater moral dangers; certainly a great ordeal for those classes which are now becoming largely conscious of power, and never heretofore subjected to its deteriorating influences. These had been confined in their action to the classes above them, because they were its sole possessors. Now is the time for the true friend of his country to remind the masses that their present political elevation is owing to no principles less broad and noble than these—the love of liberty, of liberty for all without distinction of class, creed, or country, and the resolute preference of the interests of the whole to any interest, be it what it may, of a narrower scope."

Mr. Gladstone remained member for Midlothian until the General Election of 1895; and a pair was eventually arranged for him with Mr. C. P. Villiers, the Father of the House. The announcement that this pair was broken in Committee on the Welsh Disestablishment Bill* was thought to have injured the Government, and to have helped to produce the fiasco of a resignation upon cordite. An explanation of Mr. Gladstone's action was given by Mr. Herbert Gladstone at Leeds on July 8th. Mr. Gladstone, he said, did not disagree with the policy of his late colleagues, but the Disestablishment Bill, a complicated measure, was drawn after his retirement, and on three points in it he wished to have free action. He paired in favour of the Second Reading of the Bill, and then wrote to say that he must have a free hand on the three points in question. The Whips, on discussing the matter, found that the three points came up in different forms and were liable to come up on different occasions. Mr. Ellis was therefore compelled to break Mr. Gladstone's pair for committee.

Attitude towards the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, 1895.

The Liberal defeat of 1895 was the most crushing which any English party had suffered since the Election of 1832. The cause of progress had lost its organ voice; and there were only a few scattered letters to show that

* This was in June, when Mr. Gladstone was taking a voyage on the *Tantallon Castle* for the purpose of seeing the opening of the Kiel Canal.

the old leader still kept his faith in the future of the party which he had led to so many triumphs and with which he had combated so much adversity. As he had never tolerated so he never entertained disloyalty to the cause which he believed to be right and the principles which he believed to be true.

In the years which elapsed between Mr. Gladstone's resignation and

MR. GLADSTONE BIDDING HIS COLLEAGUES FAREWELL.

the commencement of his last illness his love of reading and writing and talking remained. His intellect had lost some of its old readiness to appreciate new points of view, but his moral enthusiasm was still undiminished, his dialectical faculty unimpaired; his style had lost much of its redundancy without losing its vigour, and his memory remained as marvellous as ever. Critics, many of whom would be hard put to it if asked to quote a few consecutive lines from the text, are fond of sneering at Mr. Gladstone's study of the classics; and a good story is told, by one who was present, about some young scoffers who had the impudence to chaff the great man about his devotion to Homer. It was after dinner and the young men were smoking.

"The old man was 'humbly abstinent,' as he put it; but he sat in the midst of the cigars, as merry and as young in heart as any of us. 'Homer!' he said. 'I believe I could go on at almost any place you could start me in!' I was next to him; he turned to me with his eyes blazing and said, 'Try!' I never was so taken aback in

all my life. I hadn't looked at Homer for twenty years: and to be 'put on' at a moment's notice! And by Mr. Gladstone! However, I pulled myself together, and by good luck remembered two lines, which I repeated. 'I know! I know! Sixth book of Iliad, somewhere about the three hundredth line,' or something like that. Then he shut his eyes as before and poured forth five or six lines of thunderous Greek verse. 'Isn't that it?' he asked. I had to confess that I had no notion whether that was it or not. But I looked it up when I got home; and that *was* it."

**Armenia.**

The last episode which belongs to the province marked out for the present writer is well-nigh the saddest and noblest in Mr. Gladstone's glorious life. In that part of Armenia which Lord Beaconsfield's action in 1878 had saved to the Sultan the condition of the Christian population had long been miserable. Mr. Gladstone's recall of the peripatetic consuls, a step taken with the object of avoiding friction, had done more harm than good. The friends of Armenia felt that vigilance was necessary, and in 1890 the Anglo-Armenian Association was formed under the presidency of Mr. Bryce,* and with the support of the Duke of Westminster. In the autumn of 1894 the Armenian massacres began, and the Association received certain intelligence that they had been devised and ordered by the Sultan. The horrible news was communicated to Hawarden; for all hearts and hopes turned to the champion who, twenty years before, had taken up the cause of Bulgaria. On Mr. Gladstone's eighty-fifth birthday (December 29th, 1894) an Armenian deputation visited Hawarden and presented a chalice to be placed in Hawarden church. Mr. Gladstone, in a short address, struck the old note of humanity. If, he said, it were true that the outrages and the scenes and abominations of 1876 in Bulgaria had been repeated in Armenia in 1894, then "it is time that one general shout of execration, not of men, but of deeds—one general shout of execration directed against deeds of wickedness—should rise from outraged humanity, and should force itself into the ears of the Sultan of Turkey, and make him sensible, if anything can make him sensible, of the madness of such a course."

But the massacres went on. Lord Rosebery's Government had taken no active measures against Turkey. Russia, which might have co-operated with Lord Rosebery, would not co-operate with Lord Salisbury. But there were many Unionists who held by the old Liberal tradition; and at Chester, in August, 1895, an attempt was made to "strengthen the hands" of the new Government. The Duke of Westminster† was in the chair, and Mr. Gladstone spoke, with a moderation which attracted the support of the *Times*,‡ in favour of intervention in Armenia. But Lord Salisbury's diplomacy went forward, and England skulked behind the formula of the Concert of Europe. There was the fear strongly felt, and at last expressed by Lord Rosebery, that decided and sole action by Great Britain would provoke a European war. At any rate, no one was left save Mr. Gladstone who could generate and focus the indignation of the

* Succeeded by Mr. F. S. Stephenson in 1892.

† It is interesting to notice that a common horror of the Armenian massacres brought the Dukes of Argyll and Westminster once more into active co-operation with Mr. Gladstone. The Old Crusaders, *Punch's* beautiful cartoon, depicts the Duke of Argyll and Mr. Gladstone as brothers-in-arms again.

‡ The *Times*, August 7th, 1895. A hope was expressed that Mr. Gladstone would be rewarded for "an unparalleled effort."

country in any effective sense. Once more, on September 25th, 1896, he was brought forth from his retirement to speak in Hengler's Circus, Liverpool, and for seventy-five minutes a vast audience listened spell-bound. The massacres in Armenia, he reminded them, had been followed by the massacre of 4,000 Armenians in Constantinople; and "the Great Assassin" had received "distinct countenance" from the continued presence of the six Ambassadors in his bloodstained capital.

"Let us consider what was the massacre of Bulgaria in comparison with the massacre of Armenians. It created in Europe a greater sensation. Was it worse and more atrocious? On the contrary, I don't hesitate to say that, abominable and execrable and unpardonable as it was, yet it was of paler colour than those massacres which have taken place in the recesses of the Armenian hills. It was of a paler colour because, in the first place, it was in the main confined to the work of murder; but in the Armenian massacres to the work of murder was added the work of pillage, the work of torture, the work of lust, the work of starvation, and every accessory that it was possible for human wickedness to devise. The distinction of the massacres of Constantinople, as compared with those that had taken place before, was not in their moral infamy, it was in this—that to all the other dreadful manifestations which had formerly been displayed in the face of the world, there was added consummate insolence. Translate the acts of the Sultan into words and they become these: 'I have tried your patience in distant places, and I will try it under your own eyes. I have desolated my provinces; I will now desolate my capital. I have found that your sensitiveness has not been effectually provoked by all that I have hitherto done. I will come nearer to you and see whether by vicinity I shall or shall not awake the wrath which has slept so long.' Some of it has been awakened; and the weakness of diplomacy, I trust, is now about to be strengthened by the echoes of a nation's voice."

Even then Mr. Gladstone had not lost all hope of the Government. There is a note of prudence and restraint to qualify the indignant protest which he launches against the theory that England must, under all circumstances, make the consciences of the other Powers the measure of her own. Coercion, he maintained, did not necessarily mean war. Greece was not constituted nor Montenegro extended by the Concert of Europe. "England has her part to play." The speech at Liverpool was followed up with a letter to the Bishop of Rochester, dated Penmaenmawr, October 17th, 1896:—

"MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,—I hope that the weight and voice of your London meeting may worthily crown the proceedings of the last two months, which thus far have been without a parallel during my political life, especially as regards the union of the religious and representative bodies with the direct voice of the nation.

"The great object at the moment is to strengthen the hands of Lord Salisbury for the stoppage of the series of massacres probably still unfinished, and for provision against their renewal; as we believe he will use his powerful position for the best. I personally object in the strongest manner to abridging his discretion by laying down this and that as things which he ought not to do. This grave error has, so far as I know, been carefully avoided in the resolutions passed at the innumerable meetings concerning Armenia.

"To say that our enforcement of our Treaty rights to stop systematic massacre, together with effective security against our abusing them for selfish purposes, would provoke hostilities from one or more Powers, is in my opinion a wild paradox with no support from reason or history.

"To advertise beforehand in the ears of the Great Assassin that our action under all circumstances will be cut down to what the most backward of the Six may think sufficient, appears to me, after the experience we have had, to be an abandonment alike of duty and of prudence. A national movement subjected at the outset to such a condition must, in my opinion, be not only barren of results but probably mischievous, by encouraging hopes doomed to disappointment.

"The Concert of Europe is most valuable and important; but I consider that such an announcement beforehand is the certain road to prevent our obtaining it. . . .

"I write without the smallest pretension to authority. But I cannot escape or disclaim the moral responsibility of one who, for a period of forty-five years, from the year 1850, frequently had an active concern in the foreign affairs of this country, and who for many years lived, as Prime Minister, in incessant and most intimate relations of confidence with the Foreign Minister of the day.

"I may, perhaps, add, that I have had rather special opportunities for knowing of what materials the present Sultan, with all his seeming obstinacy, is made.—I remain, my dear Lord Bishop, with cordial respect, your very sincere and faithful

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

At last, on March 13th, 1897, in an open letter to the Duke of Westminster, written at Cannes, Mr. Gladstone summed up the broad plea for liberty, Christianity, and humanity. The events which, for two years, had been occurring in the East were, he wrote, "of such a nature as to stir our common humanity from its innermost recesses, and to lodge a trustworthy appeal from the official to the personal conscience." An uneasy consciousness that nations as well as Cabinets were concerned had at length reached the public mind. The Sultan, "having exhausted in Armenia every expedient of deliberate and wholesale wickedness," had carried out another huge massacre in his own capital. But the Six Powers had taken no effectual step in the direction of "punishment, reparation, or even prevention"; "every extreme of wickedness is sacrosanct when it passes in a Turkish garb." An analysis of the Concert of Europe, with an interesting summary of the work which a Liberal Government got out of it in 1880–81, shows that as "no tool" can be better to use than the European Concert when it is in working order, so none can be worse when it is not. Two Powers under two young men bearing the high title of Emperor, the one "a pure and perfect despotism, the other equivalent to it in matters of foreign policy," had been using their influence in the Concert to fight steadily against freedom. "But why are we to have our Government pinned to their aprons?" Another historical retrospect illustrates the "amazing infatuation" of statesmen who hawked about that "rent and ragged catchword" of the Integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In the case of Crete, a long list of revolts and massacres had shown that the Central Power had "no title to retain its sanguinary and ineffectual dominion." Prince George's gallant expedition was justified by community of blood, religion, history, sympathy, and interest. "Greece, whom some seem disposed to treat as a criminal and disturber, has by her bold action conferred a great service upon Europe. She has made it impossible to palter with this question as we paltered with the question of Armenia." Who should punish Greece for that good deed? Not the French or the Italians, least of all the English, "to whom the air of freedom is the very breath of their nostrils."

**Liberty, Christianity, and Humanity.**

**Crete.**

From every point of view, style, conciseness, scope and purpose, the open letter stands out among the best and most powerful of Mr. Gladstone's prose compositions. A generous tribute to Greek courage, a sad admission of British failure, it will outlive the fame of the German Kaiser and the dominion of his Turkish ally.

F. W. HIRST.

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# CHAPTER XX.

## MR. GLADSTONE'S LAST DAYS.

Peace after Strife—Beginning of the End—At Cannes—Returning to England—At Bournemouth—Longing for the End—Going Home to Die—Bearing Testimony—A Nation's Sympathy—A Joy not of this World—A World in Mourning—The Lying in State—The Funeral—Last Words.

THE closing years of Mr. Gladstone's life were in all respects more fortunate and happy than those which, as a rule, fall to the man of action and affairs. He was granted that which he had always so fervently desired: a season of peace after the long years of strife and effort, a season in which he was able not merely to bring all the varied labours of his life to a well-rounded conclusion, but to find full leisure for those spiritual studies and meditations which from youth to age had ever been dear to his heart. Now and again, as previous pages of this volume have told, he was drawn out of the peaceful retirement of Hawarden by some call of public duty that the veteran could not resist. The call which sounded loudest and which moved him to the greatest efforts was that which reached his ears from the victims of Turkish cruelty and oppression. To that great appeal from suffering humanity he was never deaf. For the rest it may be said that he spent these closing years in an atmosphere of peaceful thought and labour. Still maintaining his relations with old colleagues and political friends, he yet withdrew further and further from the party arena. He who had so long been the foremost fighter of his time now wished only for peace, and those who were brought in contact with him found that, whilst he maintained as strenuously as he had ever done the principles by which he had been guided in his public life, he was anxious to avoid mere party controversy, and to spend his closing years in amity and good will with all men. Reading was still, as it had so long been, his great solace and recreation; but in the Temple of Peace the desk which had been for half a century appropriated to political business now remained almost untouched. His mind was occupied with other and nobler things than the conflicts of parties.

Peace after Strife.

It was in the month of September, 1897, that the first serious anxiety with regard to his physical condition was felt by his friends. His impaired eyesight and hearing had been accepted by himself with equanimity, as the natural consequences of the age to which he had been spared, and there were no other symptoms which occasioned him distress. But in the month just named a grave change took place in his condition. He had been suffering for some time from what were believed to be neuralgic pains in the nose and cheekbone. When staying at Butterstone, the seat of his devoted friend Mr. Armitstead, in this month of September, these pains attacked the eye, and caused excruciating agony. It was found that to use the eye in reading aggravated the pain, and most reluctantly, before he finished his visit to

Beginning of the End.

Mr. Armitstead Mr. Gladstone gave up his life-long habit of reading—never to resume it. His deafness made it difficult for him to enjoy being read to by others. Happily it did not prevent his appreciation of music, and for the brief remainder of his life his greatest intellectual solace was in listening to the playing of friends, who esteemed it a happy privilege thus to be permitted to minister to him. The loss of his occupation of reading, however, caused him much distress, and made him at times somewhat restless. Yet, from the first moment at which he realised that the final call was at hand, he regarded the future with the greatest calmness. To him, to be absent from the body was only to be present with the Lord; and even when at Butterstone, more than six months before the end was reached, he talked cheerfully and buoyantly of the close of his life and of the entrance into that other life upon which his thoughts had long been set.

On his return to Hawarden, in October, his restlessness increased. He was among his books and on the scene of the labours he loved. But books and labours were now alike forbidden to him, and for the first time in his life he began to experience the misery of the unemployed. In conversation his restlessness passed away, and he talked with all his old force and brilliancy. But though he never complained, and, on the contrary, afforded to all around him a spectacle of sublime Christian fortitude and resignation, the increasing severity of the pains in the face, together with an ever-growing physical weakness, became distressing to witness. In this situation, and with the prospect of the rigours of an English winter before him, he somewhat unexpectedly resolved to go to Cannes, in the hope that in the sunshine of the Riviera he might find some alleviation of his sufferings. His family and friends were very apprehensive as to the consequences of this step, for they knew now that some hidden and undefined mischief was at work, sapping his strength, and they feared that if he left England he might never return to it alive. But they yielded to his urgent wish to try the effects of a complete change, and to Cannes accordingly he went on the 25th of November, having left Hawarden on the 23rd, and spent that and the following night at the Bishop of Rochester's residence at Kennington Park.

**At Cannes.**

At Cannes he once more became a resident in the Château Thorenc, the property of his friend Lord Rendel, with whom he was connected by the marriage of the daughter of the latter to his own son, Henry Gladstone. The sojourn at Cannes was a trying one, not only to Mr. Gladstone but to those around him—Mrs. Gladstone, his children, and one or two faithful friends. The paroxysms of pain—the "roaring pains," as he called them—became more frequent and more severe. In the intervals of the attacks he received friends, and talked with them cheerfully. On fine days, when his state permitted it, he drove out and enjoyed the sunshine as it flooded the Esterelles and the fretted shores of the Mediterranean. He even lunched with a friend on one occasion, and was then so full of his old vivacity that those who were with him began to hope that their fears were exaggerated. But a change for the worse set in, and Mr. Gladstone himself felt that the end was drawing near. He made up his mind to return to England. Hawarden was pronounced unsuitable as a place of winter residence for an invalid. Reluctantly he had to agree to give

up the thought of going home, but upon returning to his own country —the land of his life-long love and service—he was resolutely bent. In the opening of this work I have described the scene of his departure from the Château Thorenc, and of the parting blessing he bestowed upon its inmates when he left it for ever.* It was more notable from this time forward than it had ever been before that his whole mind and heart seemed to be filled with gratitude to those around him for even the least of the services which they rendered to him in his pain and helplessness. More and more, also, those around him felt that he

*Photo: Numa Blanc fils, Cannes.*

MR. AND MRS. GLADSTONE STARTING FOR A DRIVE FROM THE CHÂTEAU THORENC (LORD RENDEL ON THE LEFT, MR. HENRY GLADSTONE ON THE RIGHT).

was visibly dwelling in spiritual communion with the God and Saviour to whom his heart was given. All his thoughts seemed to be bent upon the themes of the Divine Love and the future life. There was comparatively little now to recall the great statesman, the splendid orator, the patriot, and the leader of men. He was rather the humble sufferer, ever conscious of his own weaknesses and infirmities, and trusting in all things to the mercy and goodness of the Infinite Love.

**Returning to England.**

On Wednesday, the 16th of February, he left Cannes, and reaching London on the Friday, stayed at 4, Whitehall Court, until the following Tuesday. Only one or two relatives and friends were permitted to see him during this last sojourn upon the scene of so many of his triumphs. One duty he did not neglect. On the day after his arrival, he drove to

*See pp. 40–42.

Marlborough House, and with his own hand inscribed his and his wife's names in the visitors' book. It was a last recognition of the unvarying kindness and consideration which he had received, through years of storm as well as sunshine, from the Prince and Princess of Wales—a last emphatic demonstration of his unswerving devotion to the Royal Family of Great Britain.

It had been decided that he should go to Bournemouth, and there, if his life were spared, await the coming of spring. But his stay at Bournemouth was short. His sufferings increased, and it was determined that a London specialist should be called in to make a careful examination into his condition. This step had been urged upon Mr. Gladstone before, but he had always refused to agree to it. On March 18th Sir Thomas Smith went to Bournemouth, and in consultation with Dr. Habershon arrived at the conclusion that the pain in the face, which of late had been attended by a swelling of the palate, was due to sarcoma. He communicated to Mr. Gladstone this discovery, and the fact that his disease was mortal, on the same day.

**At Bournemouth.**

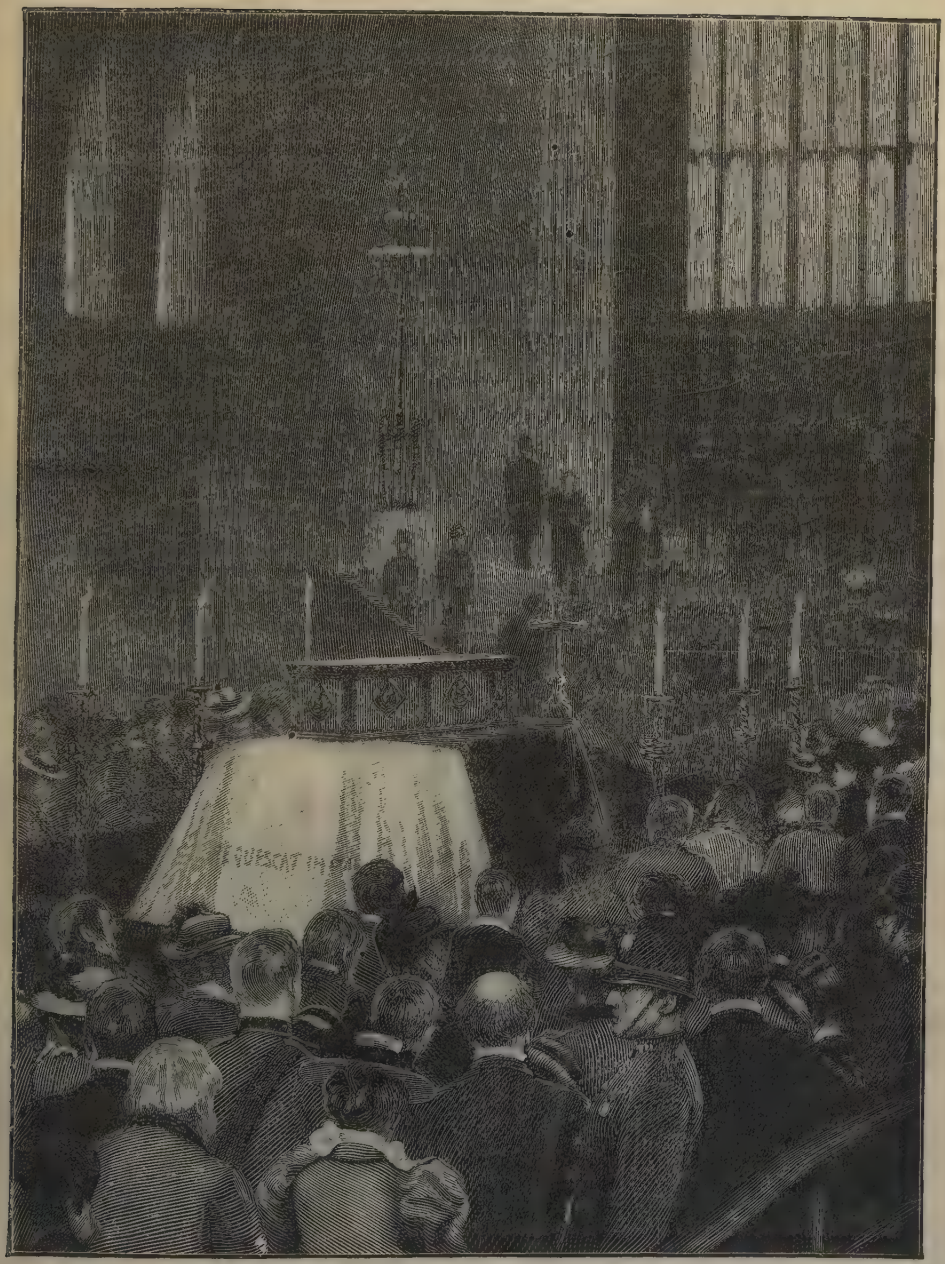
The illustrious invalid received the announcement not so much with calmness as with a serene joy. For months his life had been one of suffering. He had been shut off from all the many fields of intellectual activity in which he had delighted to work, and he was keenly sensitive with regard to the care and anxiety which his condition caused to others. The announcement that his end was inevitable and was near was hailed by him as the prisoner hails the order of release. In the previous October, in a letter to Dr. Guinness Rogers, the eminent Nonconformist minister, he had said, "My general health, to use a well-known phrase, is wonderfully good. I seem, indeed—but this is want of faith—to fear being kept here too long. Meantime, as the day of parting draws near, I rejoice to think how small the differences [with members of other branches of the Christian Church] are becoming as compared with the agreements, and how much smaller they will yet come to be if God in His mercy shall take away from me the filthy raiment and grant me the happy change of raiment." This was the spirit in which he now received the tidings that the great change was at hand. "To depart, which is far better," was the sentiment that filled his heart.

**Longing for the End.**

But his desire was to die at home, amid the familiar surroundings of the house where he had spent his happiest years, in the peaceful seclusion of his family life. So, quickly following upon the announcement of the surgeons, he made his last journey from Bournemouth to Hawarden. One most pathetic incident attended that journey. The news that he was leaving Bournemouth had spread abroad in the town, and some inkling of the truth as to his condition had leaked out. When he reached the railway station there was a crowd awaiting his arrival, and as he walked with almost vigorous step across the platform, someone called out, "God bless you, sir!" Instantly he turned, and facing the uncovered crowd lifted his hat, and in the deep tones which men knew so well, said, "God bless you all; and this place, and the land you love!" This benediction was Mr. Gladstone's last utterance in public.

**Going Home to Die.**

Of the closing weeks at Hawarden there is little to say. They were



THE LYING-IN-STATE IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

weeks of great suffering; but they enabled the dying man to offer to the world a wonderful spectacle of courage, religious faith, and humble fortitude. After the 18th of April he was unable to go downstairs; and much of his time was passed in sleep, opiates being administered to him for the relief of his pain. During his waking intervals he saw not a few old friends and took his last farewell. In those days no word having reference to passing events crossed his lips. To the things of this world he was already dead. It was only of the eternal verities, of God's infinite mercy, of His free forgiveness for the repentant sinner, of the great Hereafter, that he spoke to those who came with sad hearts to say good-bye. In his hours of loneliness he constantly repeated passages of Scripture, and favourite hymns, one in particular which was hourly upon his lips being Newman's well-known "Praise to the Holiest in the Height."

Bearing Testimony.

In the meantime a strange and almost unexampled spectacle was being witnessed throughout Great Britain. As the consciousness that Mr. Gladstone's last hours had come and that he was passing them in sore physical tribulation, but with never-yielding courage and resignation, spread abroad throughout the land, public feeling was stirred to its very depths. All rancour disappeared from the breasts of his political opponents, party feeling seemed to die away, and the whole nation joined in watching by the bed on which one who was now universally recognised as being above and before everything else, "a great Christian man," to use Lord Salisbury's words, was stretched in the pangs of dissolution. "Kindness, kindness, nothing but kindness!" was a phrase that often fell from Mr. Gladstone's lips in those last days, and he was not without some knowledge that this kindly feeling towards him was now universal, and that his earnest prayer that he might die at peace with all men had been answered.

A Nation's Sympathy.

The end came on the morning of Ascension Day, May 19th, 1898. It was very peaceful. The sufferer had ceased for some time previously to feel any pain. He had taken his last farewell of servants and friends, children and wife, in perfect calm, and those who were with him had seen with wonder and reverence how the noble face was lighted up as with a joy which was not that of this world. Shortly before five o'clock his son, the Rev. Stephen Gladstone, who with the other members of the family was kneeling round the bed, read two of his favourite hymns and offered up a prayer. Mr. Gladstone was heard to murmur a distinct "Amen!" when the prayer came to an end. At ten minutes to five his breathing ceased, and he was at rest.

A Joy not of this World.

No public man of our time received such affectionate and world-wide homage at his death as that offered to Mr. Gladstone. It came from all ranks and conditions of mankind; from members of all parties; from every civilised nation in the world, and from lands where as yet civilisation is only dawning. "The world has lost its greatest citizen" were the words in which a New York journal began its comments upon his death; and this was the sentiment which seemed everywhere to prevail. To have gained such universal and such heartfelt recognition was a reward not

A World in Mourning.

unworthy of the career which had deserved and secured it. The House of Commons adjourned immediately after assembling on the day of his death. On the following day, in both Houses of Parliament, the leaders of both parties paid, amid signs of universal sympathy, tributes to his memory which proved that no differences of political opinion had blinded men to the greatness of his intellectual qualities or the supreme grandeur of his character. A public funeral in Westminster Abbey at the cost of the nation, and a monument in that great temple of reconciliation and peace, were unanimously decreed. He himself had wished to be buried at Hawarden among his own people; but he had left his executors free to decide as to the place of his interment, provided two conditions were observed. These were that the funeral ceremony should be of the simplest possible character, and that a place beside him should be reserved for the wife who had been so long his companion, his comfort, and his mainstay. The Duke of Norfolk, upon whom as Earl Marshal the arrangements for the public funeral devolved, faithfully observed these conditions. Never was a simpler funeral witnessed in a village churchyard than that of Mr. Gladstone in Westminster Abbey. But the ceremony was one of historic interest and impressiveness. For two days before the funeral the body lay in state in Westminster Hall, hard by the chamber whose walls had so often echoed to the dead man's eloquence. Countless thousands of persons passed in reverent silence before the bier, and every passer-by seemed to be a mourner. When, without pomp and state of any kind, the funeral service took place in Westminster Abbey on Saturday, May 28th, 1898, the whole nation was represented within the sacred walls. The Prince of Wales and his son, the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, Mr. Gladstone's successor in the Premiership, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Arthur Balfour, Sir William Harcourt, the Duke of Rutland, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Lord Rendel, and Mr. Armitstead acted as pall-bearers. The members of both Houses attended the funeral in a body. Representatives of all the great cities, institutions, churches, and professions of the country were included in the illustrious company; whilst the chief mourners, amongst whom was Mrs. Gladstone, were surrounded by almost all the surviving men and women who had been honoured by the friendship of Mr. Gladstone during his lifetime. From far and wide, from great monarchs such as the Emperor of Russia, from grateful nations like the people of Italy, had come expressions of grief at the death of one who was recognised by all as being the foremost advocate of liberty and of justice for all men; but even dearer to the heart of the illustrious dead than these tributes would have been the evidences which were forthcoming at that great funeral ceremony that the people of the land of his love were united as one man in their sorrow at his death and in their recognition of his work. Only to the greatest of the heroes of our national story have honours been rendered at their death such as fell to the lot of Mr. Gladstone; and upon none, be he warrior, or statesman, or poet, or philanthropist, was higher honour ever bestowed.

The Lying in State.

The Funeral.

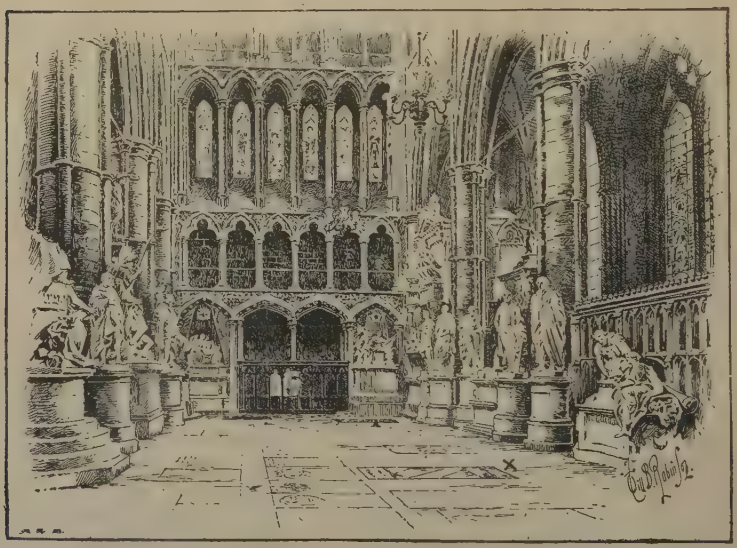
We have sought in these pages to tell the story of the greatest career of our time. It has been largely—perhaps too largely—the story

of political struggles and great legislative achievements. But through it all, towering above the mists of party passion and the mysteries of constructive statesmanship, rises the figure of the man himself—a figure grand and unique in its individuality, commanding in its intellectual greatness and force of will, but above all inspiring and fascinating in that simple piety that, not alone in the supreme hour of death but in every moment of a prolonged and illustrious career, possessed and transfigured the soul of WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

Last Words.

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake."

WEMYSS REID.



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THE GRAVE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY (INDICATED BY A X).

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